

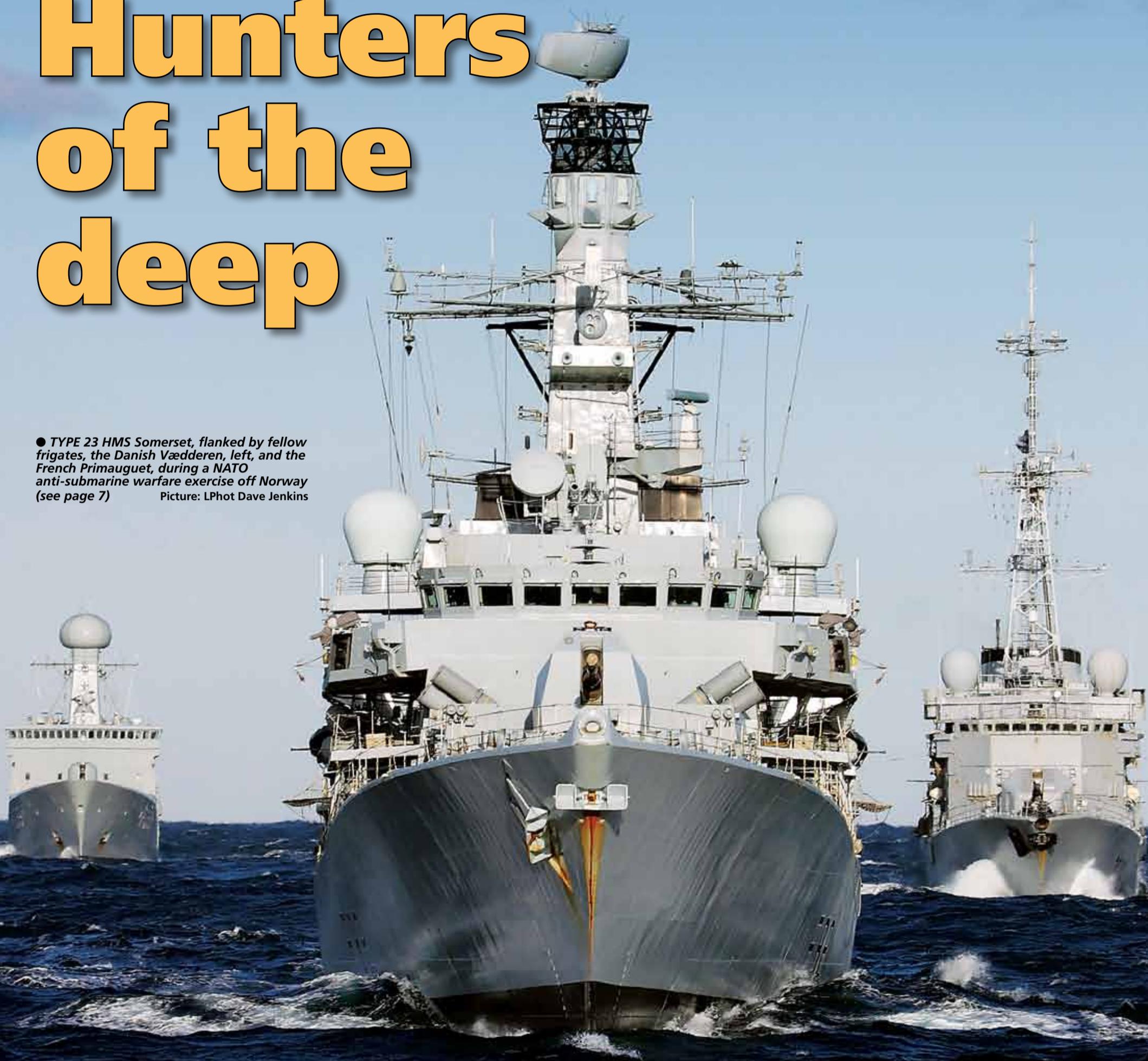


NAVY NEWS

April 2017

Hunters of the deep

● TYPE 23 HMS Somerset, flanked by fellow frigates, the Danish Vædderen, left, and the French Primauguet, during a NATO anti-submarine warfare exercise off Norway (see page 7) Picture: LPhot Dave Jenkins



Final farewell

Flypast marks end of Lynx era

Blizzard wizards

Royals wrap up Norway training





More than a feline

WITH their usurper lashed firmly to the flight deck, the final four Lynx in Naval Service fly along HMS Diamond's starboard side with the destroyer anchored in Plymouth Sound.

At this point the quartet are just 150 miles into a 550-mile farewell tour through the skies of southern England, over many of the locations etched into Lynx history.

Glastonbury Tor, a waypoint for any Yeovilton aviator, scaled by several dozen wellwishes



pictures: lphot dan rosenbaum, rmas yeovilton, and lee howard





who unfurled at least four White Ensigns in tribute – as they'd done for the Jungle Sea King exactly 12 months before.

Next to Filton, one of the homes of engine manufacturer Rolls-Royce, the helicopter museum at Weston-super-Mare, Devonport, BRNC. Low on fuel, they were forced to skip Lyme Regis and cut across to refill tanks back at Yeovilton before lifting off once more on the second leg: 300 miles around southern and south-eastern England.

The theme of the afternoon tour was largely the same – places with Lynx links, such as the depth repair complex at Fleetlands, HMS Excellent and Portsmouth Naval Base, a refuelling stop at RAF Odiham, then on to the Isle of Dogs (Lynx patrolled the capital's skies as part of the security cordon for the 2012 Olympics).

Their route took the helicopters past the O2 Arena at Greenwich, the world-famous Greenwich Observatory, past the Walkie Talkie (officially 20 Fenchurch St), past St Paul's, past the MOD HQ and the Fleet Air Arm Memorial in neighbouring Victoria

Embankment Gardens, past the Houses of Parliament (undergoing refurbishment), within sight of the Wembley Arch. Then along the Thames before turning for home via the test pilots' base at Boscombe Down and Compton Abbas airfield.

Morning and afternoon, in schools and workplaces, former Lynx men and women, enthusiasts and supporters turned out to wave the formation of helicopters as it passed overhead.

Trainee officers at Dartmouth spelled out 'Lynx' on the parade ground in front of the college, while the RN's engineers and technicians of tomorrow formed 'Farewell!' at Sultan.

Thousands of air and ground crew who have lived and breathed Lynx have passed through both establishments in the 41 years since the first of these sporty little helicopters were delivered to Yeovilton.

So when the quartet landed back in formation around 4pm on Friday March 17, it was an emotional moment for every pilot and observer; apart from a demonstration at the helicopters'

decommissioning ceremony six days later, this was the last hurrah for the Lynx.

"I cannot think of a more fitting end to such a fantastic aircraft than to fly around the south of the UK to say 'thank you' to all who've supported and been involved with the Lynx's extremely successful – and busy – career," said pilot Lt George Thompson.

"With this being my final flight in the 'sports car of the skies', I relished the time airborne, whilst trying to suppress the poignant emotions after flying this wonderful and steadfast chariot for over 13 years."

The fly-past was a showpiece, but Lynx remained at the forefront of RN operations to the very end of its life.

Just days before, Lynx ZF557 was set down on the Yeovilton tarmac – closing a long, proud chapter in Fleet Air Arm history.

For the previous nine months, the helicopter and its ten air and ground crew had done everything HMS Portland has done and gone wherever the frigate has sailed.

They were the last Lynx flight to deploy with a Royal Navy warship, the end of a long line of the helicopter going back through numerous iterations and models to the late 1970s.

It brought three souls back to its parent unit 815 Naval Air

Squadron at Yeovilton – Flight Commander Lt Laura Cambrook, her pilot Lt 'Jack' Leonard and senior maintenance rating CPO Damion Marks.

"It's really great to be back after a very demanding but exhilarating deployment," said Lt Cambrook, who was embraced by her husband Tom Lindsey on the apron.

"It's been a very successful deployment and poignant too and I will miss the Lynx. She rattles a lot, is small and agile – it's just a great little helicopter that so many of us love to fly."

Most of Portland's deployment was routine – as nine-month Indian Ocean/Atlantic deployments go.

But as the frigate neared home, the aircrew decided it was time to use up their remaining Sea Skua missiles – one of the UK's most successful post-war weapons; it's credited with all but knocking out Saddam Hussein's Navy in 1991.

After a day's thorough preparation – only one of the Flight had worked with live variants of the air-to-surface missile before – three live Sea Skuas were fixed to the Mk8's pylons.

Once the air and sea space around the helicopter was declared clear, Lt Cambrook flicked the trigger and...

"A very loud whoosh was heard inside the Lynx before we saw the missile appearing in front of the helicopter flying very fast into the distance," she said.

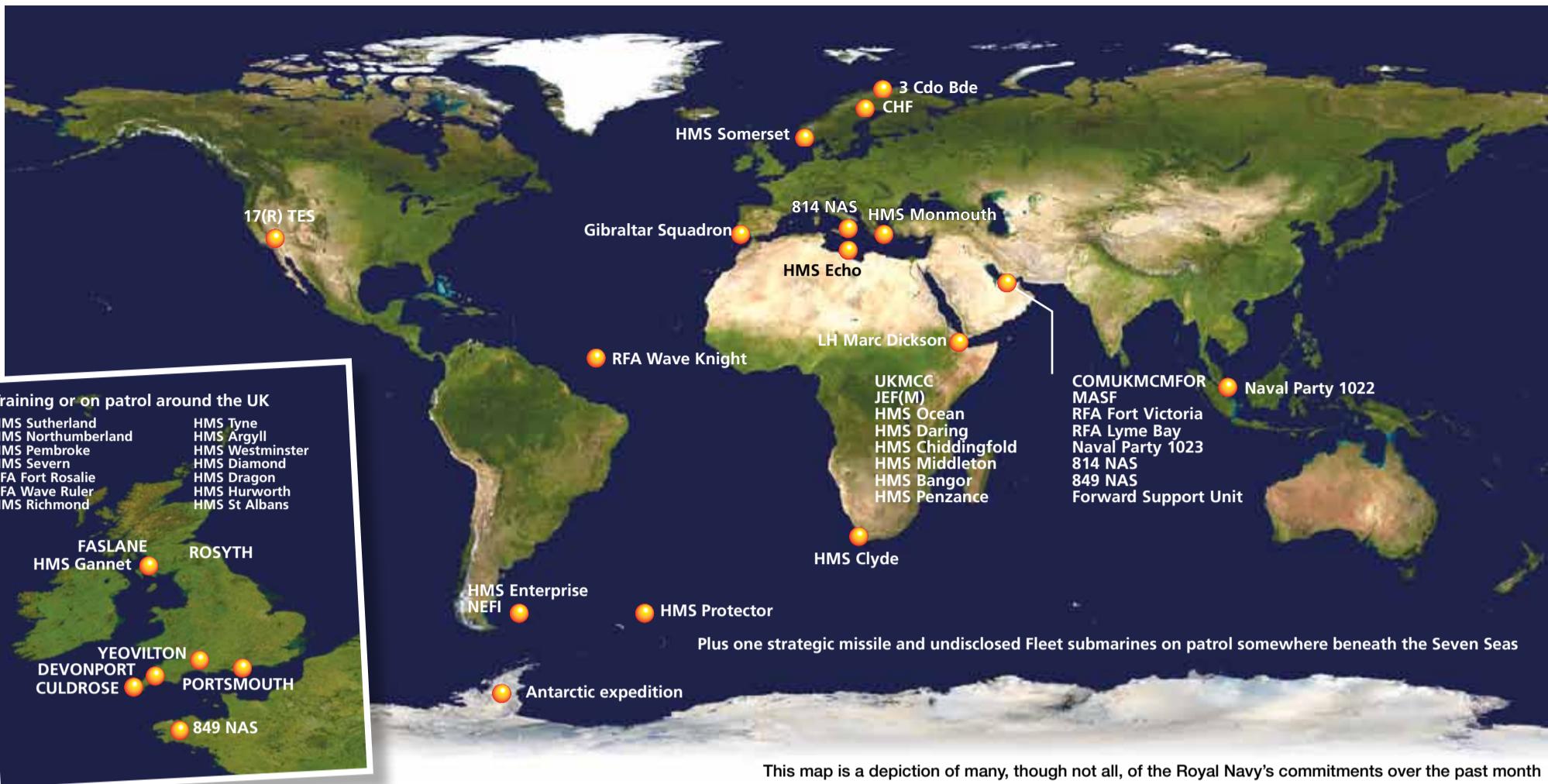
It's only the third time live Sea Skuas have been fired this century – and on this instance they were set to deliberately miss their target, the 'killer tomato', normally used to hone the aiming skills of a ship's gunnery team, skimming just over the giant inflatable.

Sea Skua, like the helicopter which carried it into battle in the Falklands and Gulf, now passes into history, replaced in due course by Sea Venom.

As for 815 NAS, long the home of Lynx Flights for the fleet, by the time you read this it will be home of Wildcat Flights for that same fleet.

So, Wildcat, it's over to you. No pressure...





This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month



FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

WORK continues apace throughout the UK to ensure the Royal Navy is ready to take delivery of its new carrier **HMS Queen Elizabeth** (see page 13). In Portsmouth, the first ship to use the new Princess Royal Jetty arrived to mark a milestone in preparations at the base where £100m has been invested.

At RNAS Culdrose, aircraft handlers travelled from Rosyth to practise moving the new F-35B Lightning II aircraft around the Dummy Deck as four Ground Training Aids arrived at the base.

As the Senior Service prepares to welcome the new ship, it was time to bid farewell to some Royal Navy stalwarts in the form of the **Lynx Mk8** helicopter (see pages 2-3) and **RFA Gold Rover** (see pages 14-15).

Thousands of people across the South of England waved goodbye to the last RN Lynx as aircrews from **815 NAS** took part in a five-hour farewell flypast. In Portsmouth, a sizeable crowd gathered to watch Gold Rover make her final journey into harbour – flying a 140-metre decommissioning pennant in tribute to the tanker's 43-years of service.

In contrast, the Royal Navy welcomed the newest member of the family, **HMS Forth** (see page 7). The first of five second-generation River-class ships, she was named at BAE's Scotstoun yard on the Clyde.

The **Type 26 Global Combat Ship** is also taking shape (see right and page 20). Although the primary role will be building on the Type 23's anti-submarine warfare pedigree, they will be able to undertake a variety of tasks, from warfighting to humanitarian efforts.

Encouraging sailors of the future has also been on the agenda this month with British Science Week seeing youngsters from across the country take part in the **Royal Navy University Training College Young Engineers' Challenge** at HMS Sultan (see page 22).

And providing a glimpse of the type of training that might be available to them in years to come was a submarine-themed 'future training showcase' at QinetiQ's Farnborough site (see page 20) – including a **virtual reality suite** – designed to be applied to a wide range of training needs.

A dozen **marine engineers** have passed out as Leading Hands (see page 22) on a new fast-track course at HMS Sultan.

In the Middle East the Royal Navy's senior front-line HQ, **UKMCC**, is preparing to move into the future HMS Jufair in Bahrain (see page 17).

An Anglo-American operation ended with the seizure of heroin worth upwards of £40m (see page 5) in the Arabian Sea. Sea Kings from **849 NAS** and **RFA Fort Victoria** were involved in the bust.

Back to the present and Royal Marines have come to the end of their annual cold-weather warfare training in Norway (see centre pages) with international exercise **Joint Viking**, which also involved the USMC, Norwegian Army and the Dutch Korps Mariniers.

Hundreds of families and well-wishers gave **HMS Portland** a warm homecoming (see page 6) as she arrived in Devonport after her nine-month deployment.

HMS Daring led the UK element – minehunters **Bangor** and **Middleton** and **RFA Lyme Bay** – for Khunjar Hadd off Oman (see page 6), an international exercise which is carried out annually.

Finally, a **Royal Navy Reservist** talks about his first overseas deployment (see page 23), as he swapped London for Djibouti.

Ready to combat threat from deep

VIEW BRIDGE

IN the latest of our monthly features on the future of the Royal Navy, we explore the importance of anti-submarine warfare.

"ONCE more, we play our dangerous game; a game of chess... your fathers before you and your older brothers played this game and played it well. But today the game is different..." – The Hunt for Red October.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the submarine threat receded in the eyes of many Western strategists, and yet technology continued to evolve.

2016 was a year of firsts, as North Korea tested a submarine-launched ballistic missile, India commissioned their first domestically-built nuclear-powered boat and Russia launched cruise missiles against targets in Syria from under the sea.

Today, there are over 500 submarines in the world, operated by 40 navies. Nuclear boats remain in a league of their own, but the latest conventionally-powered submarines are quieter, more reliable and better operated than their diesel equivalents of yesteryear.

Nowhere is the underwater challenge more pressing than to our north; the Commander of the US Sixth Fleet has likened the situation to "The Fourth Battle of Atlantic."



● A Merlin Mk2 from 814 NAS dips its sonar during an anti-submarine warfare exercise from Fleet Flagship HMS Ocean

Few military skills are as perishable as those required for anti-submarine warfare (ASW), but the Royal Navy retained sufficient proficiency after the Cold War to rank among the most capable practitioners today.

In particular, the pairing of our towed-array Type 23 frigates with the upgraded Merlin Mk2 helicopter has proved a winning combination, and this is the baseline from which we now seek to strengthen our ASW capability.

This renewal is already under way through the introduction of seven Astute-class submarines. Meanwhile, in the skies, the arrival of the P8 Poseidon

Maritime Patrol Aircraft from 2019 will restore a vital capability to the UK's inventory. Although flown by the RAF, every P8 crew will include ASW specialists from the Royal Navy.

The US Navy is already operating the same aircraft in the European theatre, and with Norway's interest in the P8, there is a real sense of a renewed 'Northern Triangle' of ASW co-operation.

As for the Surface Fleet, this summer steel will be cut for the first of eight Type 26 frigates.

The Type 26 will be one of the quietest and most potent submarine-hunters of any Navy in the world.

Names will be announced in due course, but most will inherit battle honours from the North Atlantic or Arctic Campaigns.

This is fitting, for it was in these theatres the Royal Navy developed the concepts and tactics which are the foundation for ASW operations today.

The Type 26 will operate in the same northern waters, protecting the strategic nuclear deterrent, working alongside our NATO partners and carrying the Royal Navy's reputation for ASW excellence far into the future.

However, the ASW challenge is a global one. Several regional navies have proven adept at operating midget submarines in confined and coastal waters, while the greatest increase in submarines has been in South-East Asia.

ASW is a concern wherever we operate, particularly as we return to Task Group-centred deployments and the Type 26 also has a vital role to play in protecting the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

So there is a ring of familiarity about the challenge we face, but the threat is growing in scale and scope. We too continue to explore the boundaries of underwater technology, including unmanned systems.

But undersea warfare is as much an art as it is a science, and the submariner – bold and cunning in equal measure – will always find new ways to hide.

So as we introduce new equipment, our most important task is to reinvigorate the mentality needed to think, fight and win beneath the waves.



Lava's in the air...

THIS is Europe's liveliest volcano as you've never seen it before – through the eyes of Royal Navy Merlin helicopter crews.

Attending one of Europe's largest submarine-hunting exercises in Sicily, the Flying Tigers of 814 Naval Air Squadron turned their hi-tech sensors skywards to record the violent activity of Mount Etna.

The helicopters' infra-red cameras are normally used to locate targets at night or in bad weather – either on the surface or even under the water.

But after a mock attack on a Spanish submarine in the Mediterranean, crews flew past Etna – from a safe distance – to capture the current eruptions before returning to their base at Sigonella, 20 miles south of the lava-spewing mountain.

"We know the equipment and sensors that we use to find and track submarines on our Merlin helicopters are world class, but this shows the level of clarity too," said CPO(ACMN) Ian Macmeikan, who collected the images as the helicopter returned to base.

"I've used the infra-red cameras to find all sorts of ships and submarines on the surface of the sea or under it, but I've never seen it pick up an erupting volcano before."

Despite the mesmerising sight of Nature in full force, engineers with the Merlin detachment are keeping a very close eye on the debris Etna is constantly hurling into the Sicilian atmosphere, conscious that the ash and dust can pose a serious threat to the multi-million pound helicopters and their four-strong aircrew.

"Volcanic ash can be very dangerous should it get into an aircraft's engine," explained WO Ian Morcom, 814 NAS's Senior Maintenance Rating.

"In light of Etna's current activity, we will be ready to react should an ash cloud develop near the area we are operating in. The engineers are keeping an eye out for any deposits of volcanic ash on the helicopters – the best way of telling is to look at the colour of their hands after working on the helicopter and see if they are black.

"As a precautionary measure, we will carry out additional washes of the engines to ensure safe flight. This kind of thing is not unusual for us, we are used to reacting quickly to different operating conditions and weather."

■ See our May edition for a special feature on 820's participation in NATO's Dynamic Manta anti-submarine exercise.

Baggers/Fort Vic's £40m heroin haul

WATCHED by the all-seeing eyes of a Sea King Mk7, US marines prepare to board a suspect dhow as a day-long chase across the Arabian Sea by Anglo-American naval forces reaches its showdown.

After a thorough search of the vessel – tracked since dawn by Sea Kings of 849 Naval Air Squadron – 278kg of pure, uncut heroin, worth upwards of £40m on the streets of the UK, was discovered by the boarding team from the destroyer USS Laboon.

Support ship RFA Fort Victoria – home to 849's Normandy Flight – had located the suspect dhow as she patrolled the Arabian Sea, prompting a night/day pursuit over hundreds of miles of ocean.

At first light, the support ship launched her Sea King helicopters on round-the-clock sorties tracking the craft across the sea before guiding a US Navy destroyer into a position to pounce.

The Sea Kings maintained watch of the Americans as they clambered aboard the dhow, photographing and videoing the operation for any future legal proceedings.

"This sends a clear message to those wishing to use the high seas for illicit purposes – you can run but you can't hide. We will find and catch you," said Lt Cdr Ben Unsworth, Normandy Flight's commander.

He said his engineers had



worked through the night to ensure the helicopters were ready to launch at dawn and keep an eye on the dhow all day.

"It was immensely satisfying to work with such professional units across several nations to achieve a common aim," Lt Cdr Unsworth added.

"It was especially pleasing to get a result so early in the Flight's deployment, setting the bar high for our follow-on operations."

The two helicopters used their state-of-the-art radar suite to monitor the dhow's progress, feeding constant reports to Fort Victoria, international Combined Task Force 150, which is directing the counter-terrorism/smuggling mission in the Indian Ocean, and finally the USS Laboon.

Normally based at Royal Navy

Air Station Culdrose in Cornwall, Normandy Flight had only just returned to the Middle East after a period of rest, recuperation and regeneration in the UK following their last tour.

USS Laboon's Commanding Officer Cdr Jason Labott was delighted with the outcome of an operation played out "across great distances for the common good of the international community."

"The hard work and professionalism of our boarding team, Laboon's crew, the air crews from RFA Fort Victoria and Combined Task Force 50 deserve great credit.

"Keeping these drugs off the streets helps everyone – and keeps money from those who use the profits for harm."



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Swords unsheathed off coast of Oman

ONE of the smallest warships in the US Navy's inventory accompanies HMS Daring in the Gulf of Oman as a major annual work-out for friendly navies draws to a close.

Eleven ships from four nations converged off the coast of Oman for Khunjar Hadd – Sharp Dagger – a concerted test of warships to both work together and deal with a myriad of threats.

Led by Daring, Britain committed four ships for the week-long exercise, joined by minehunters Bangor and Middleton, their mother ship RFA Lyme Bay; one American minehunter (Dextrous), two fast, heavily-armed patrol boats (Monsoon and Squall), three Omani patrol vessels and a solitary French warship, air defence frigate FS Forbin (which looks very similar to Daring) also threw their hats into the ring.

The eclectic mix of ships and roles meant the week of combined training was as varied as any sailor might wish for: gunnery, air attacks by Omani F-16s, helicopters practising rescue mission, sea boats buzzing about with boarding teams for counter-piracy/terrorism board and search drills and mine warfare and diving exercises.

"We were impressed with the capability of the Royal Navy of Oman as the exercise organisers," said Lt John Mason, Daring's Officer of the Watch 1.

"We learned a lot from each other and have much in common. The new RN Omani corvette was an impressive ship and it was good working with the crew of the Al-Shamikh amongst other ships."

Khunjar Hadd is now into its 22nd incarnation, with the host nation inviting its international allies to partake each year; the scale and variety of the resulting exercise depends on the response. The 2017 exercise saw the biggest commitment from the RN in three years – and the first year the Fleet Air Arm's new Wildcat has truly come into its own.

During the hours of darkness, Khunjar Hadd changed tack with the participants splitting into two opposing groups which had to hunt each other down, something the helicopter crew particularly enjoyed.

"Wildcat is ideally suited to long-range, over-the-horizon missions in a wide variety of conditions," explained Flight Commander Lt Andrew Henderson.

"We gave Daring extended situation awareness and are a potent weapon system at her disposal."

Indeed, other participants cried foul when Daring had located and identified her target inside 30 minutes during one midnight exercise, prompting organisers to reset the stage to give the others another chance... but then that is exactly what Khunjar Hadd is for.

"It is important to continue learning and sharing knowledge with our partner nations through exercises to strengthen our mutual ability to address threats to the freedom of navigation and free flow of commerce," explained Capt Kim Watts RFA, in command of Lyme Bay.

British and American minehunters made use of his ship during the exercise, taking on fuel and other supplies, while the ship's dock served as the launchpad for operations by clearance divers.

"The level of multi-national integration demonstrated during this exercise is inspiring and is a testament to the hard work being done here," said Capt Eric Wirstrom, Head of Commander Task Force 52, which oversees all operations by US mine warfare forces in the Gulf region.

"These exercises strengthen our solid relationships and bring us together towards the shared goal of free flow of commerce."

The US Navy and Marine Corps continued their training alongside the Omanis with a large-scale amphibious exercise (Sea Soldier) when Sharp Dagger ended, while British participants in Khunjar Hadd returned to the Gulf.

"Daring and her ship's company are approaching seven months deployed on operations. They continue to consistently display their versatility, ability and willingness to contribute to the wider security of the region," said the destroyer's CO Cdr Marcus Hember.

"Khunjar Hadd was a great example of how Daring – and the Royal Navy – continue to work closely and effectively with our regional allies in promoting and ensuring security in the region."



'Land ahoy!

WOW. That's some crowd. Mothers. Fathers. Sons. Daughters. Brothers. Sisters. Friends. Family. Journalists. Photographers.

A sea of bodies swarms on the jetty at Devonport Naval Base for the first sight of HMS Portland in nine months after a demanding hot-cold, hot-cold deployment.

Pomp, ceremony and spectacle were on hand to welcome the frigate at the end of her 40,000-mile odyssey: the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Plymouth, face painters, a myriad small Union Flags, and a good smattering of home-made banners as 650 men, women and children waited on the jetty.

Portland's tour of duty began in the heat of the Gulf and Indian Ocean, shifted to South Africa, then moved again to the Falklands and South Georgia, before heading north via the Azores and West Africa, stopping briefly in Lisbon for the final leg to embark 50 friends and family of the ship's company.

LCH Andrew Woodley was joined by his dad – a former cook in the RAF – for those few days.

"The deployment was fantastic and what was extra special was having my dad on board for the last leg," he said.

The leading hand was greeted by his sons Thomas (three months) and William (three) and their mum Laura. Dad was flown home from Chile in time for the new arrival.

"I'm so happy to see my family again and I'm so amazed at how well Laura has coped with having a new baby and another little one. It's my turn now to be woken up in the night to feed and change nappies," Andrew continued.

"Thomas has obviously grown so much. And William's always changing so much. I've missed about two years of his life because of being away on ships and courses."

Laura added: "I'm super proud of Andrew. It's been a



● The boys are back in town... Portland's junior rates are delighted to be home

Pictures: LPhot Caroline Davies, FRPU West

long deployment and he's done so well. But this nine months have been the longest of my life waiting for him while looking after a new baby and a toddler."

LWtr Juliet Long, 27, from Plymouth was joined on board by her mother Kim for the trip home.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed this deployment and very proud to show my mum how we live and work on board. The highlights were going to Muscat and South Africa," Kim said.

"I certainly had my eyes opened by life on board. The sleeping area was so cramped and the mess very small for so many girls. It's amazing how well they all get on and how bonded they are. I don't think I could be as disciplined as they all are. They are all always so busy."

Indeed they are. And after nine months together in such small space, they've become a family – one which now breaks up as Portland enters a refit and sailors, led by CO Capt Paul Stroud, move on to pastures new.

"We return with a mixture of feelings: huge pride in our achievements and joy at seeing our families again after months

away, but we have also formed long-lasting close bonds, so it is a bit sad to leave our shipmates after an intense hard-working time," Capt Stroud said.

"This has been a challenging and hugely varied deployment that has tested my ship and her company. Despite encountering temperatures ranging from sub-zero near the Antarctic to over 50 degrees in the Gulf, we have continued to deliver all that was asked of us."

The crew raised more than £5,000 for charity, led by the ship's own Batman and Robin, technicians Sam Barron and Sean Woods, both 25. The duo completed 20 ten-kilometre runs while away.

"We ran ten kilometres at each stop; Bahrain was probably the worst with a temperature of nearly 50 degrees and ridiculously high humidity," said Sean. "It's crazy to go from that to worrying about slipping over in ice in South Georgia!"

"The whole ship's company have been really supportive and we have raised £4,000 for our charities; the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and Parkinson's UK."

French first for Merlins

SIXTY Fleet Air Arm fliers and ground crew have sailed on the adventure of a lifetime as two Merlins join a French task group to the Pacific.

A flight from 845 Naval Air Squadron will be a permanent presence aboard the French assault ship FS Mistral as she leads the French Navy's annual Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc) deployment – similar to the RN's annual Cougar/JEF workout.

The five-month amphibious deployment will take the force – which includes the frigate Courbet – as far east as Japan and Guam and as far south as the northern coast of Australia, with visits to Vietnam, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Djibouti on the 24,000-mile round-trip.

The ships left the French Navy's Mediterranean home of Toulon last month with full pomp and ceremony, attended by the head of the Marine Nationale Admiral Christophe Prazuck, with the two troop-carrying Merlins arrayed on the flight deck and sailors, soldiers, marines and Brits lining the upper deck for the formal departure.

CHF briefly practised co-operation with the French Navy last year when a Jungie dropped in on Mistral's sister FS Tonnerre during combined training in UK waters.

And the Fleet Air Arm has assigned a Lynx Flight to a French ship on deployment before, with an 815 NAS helicopter from Yeovilton joining the FS Surcouf on counter-piracy duties – with considerable success.

The detachment to the Mistral is considerably longer and larger, however.

Mistral's Commanding Officer Capt Stanislas de Chargères told everyone aboard his ship they had a "long, distant operational mission" to complete. "To this requirement, I add a wish: Enjoy yourselves on our ship. Forge memories."

Duck's back in the pond

HAVING spent the winter in her home port undergoing a sustained period of maintenance, the Iron Duke is shaking off the cobwebs accumulated during several months alongside.

With an exceedingly hectic spring programme beckoning, trials have focussed on navigation, fire-fighting, rescuing an overboard sailor, coping with flooding, machinery breakdowns and calibrating sensors and weapon systems.

For the latter, that meant flashing up all the Portsmouth frigate's guns from the 4.5in 'crowdpleaser' down to the automated 30mm cannon and the manual Miniguns for self-defence, sending tracer and live rounds into the Channel.

And a Wildcat of 815 NAS at Yeovilton has joined to begin regenerating aerial operations.



Grand days out for Ocean in Malta

QUESTIONS to which the answer is "no".

Is there a finer sight in the maritime world than the White Ensign billowing on one of Her Majesty's Ships as she enters Malta's Grand Harbour?

You'd be hard pushed to find one.

Just days after a lightning-fast visit to Beirut, Britain's flagship and largest warship HMS Ocean sailed into Valletta for a 72-hour stop in Malta.

Although it looks a fine spring day for the Mighty O's arrival – captured here by photographer Paul Spiteri Lucas – the entry wasn't as smooth as it appears.

"Sailing into Grand Harbour is a unique

experience, but I have to admit the inclement weather – especially the strong side wind – posed some challenges," explained Cdr Nick Wood, the carrier's Second-in-Command.

The ship had a few engagements during her three-day stay: a reception/demonstration for 300 dignitaries including British High Consul Stuart Gill; group visits for Sea Cadets and former RN officers; and a clash with Malta RFU (the hosts triumphed 43-19).

The ship's company made the most of the opportunities afforded by the Mediterranean sunshine to enjoy the tourist

sights and culture as well as taking part in a tour of the *Game of Thrones* locations.

"The Maltese people were incredibly friendly and were delighted to see HMS Ocean alongside for a few days, with several hundred watching the ship come in and depart," said the Mighty O's head of logistics Cdr Jude Terry.

The visit ended with a particularly impressive gun salute from the Maltese in Upper Barracca Gardens, which was returned by Ocean as she sailed.

After a pit stop in Gibraltar, Ocean was due home in Plymouth just after Navy News printed.



Sink the Somerset!

THIS is what you call a sitting duck.

Perfectly lined up in the cross-hairs of HNoMS Utstein's attack periscope is HMS Somerset – her submarine-hunting Merlin Mk2 helicopter strapped to the flight deck rather than trying to track down threats lurking in the narrow but deep waters of the fjords around Bergen.

It wasn't just the Devonport-based frigate which was picked off by the Norwegian diesel submarine: the Danish HDMS Vædderen, the German tanker Spessart, and compatriots HNoMS Roald Amundsen and Helge Ingstad, plus Somerset's youngest sister HMS St Albans, all came within the boat's line of fire.

As the periscope were officers hoping to pass the toughest test of any potential warship skipper: the Submarine Command Course – aka the Perisher.

The most thrilling part of the assessment – for submariners and surface ships alike – were the 'eyes only' runs against the trainee submarine captains, who could only use visual references and a stopwatch to help them evade the attacking surface ships, all set against a picture-postcard backdrop of snow-capped mountains.

After a week charging around the fjords, the NATO allies sailed into Bergen for a well-deserved break.

Somerset's sailors took advantage of their surroundings by organising a variety of exciting activities, especially winter sports: skeet shooting, being pulled along by huskies, trying out snowmobiles, not forgetting skiing. Some of the crew took time to hike around the local area appreciating the spectacular views, with many enjoying the vista from the Fløyen Mountain on the outskirts of Bergen.

"It was great to get a group of ship's company up the mountains and to enjoy a day out on the slopes!" said Somerset's navigator Lt Matt Irwin.

"These are the sort of opportunities the Navy provides that you just have to grip with both hands."

BASKING in the late winter sunshine on the Clyde, meet the newest member of the Naval family: HMS Forth,

In keeping with Clyde tradition, the ship's name, heritage and her future affiliations, the £116m patrol ship was formally named by smashing a bottle of single malt against the hull.

After two years' work at BAE's Govan and then Scotstoun yards by around 800 men and women – not to mention the input of 130 firms across the UK in the supply chain – the moment had come for the new vessel's sponsor, Rachel Johnstone-Burt, to utter the immortal words "I name this ship..."

With the press of a button, the bottle of Deanston malt was sent crashing into the bow of the 90-metre ship – the first of five second-generation River-class vessels.

"It's easy to forget that she started life as a flat plate of steel in the winter of 2014, yet just over two years later she is afloat at Scotstoun, with the latest technologies

and combat management systems, ready to depart for sea trials later this year," Iain Stevenson, Managing Director of BAE Systems Naval Ships, told guests, including youngsters from TS Forth in Grangemouth, the new vessel's linked Sea Cadet unit.

Also addressing guests was the nation's ranking sailor, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones.

"With the naming of HMS Forth, the Royal Navy looks forward to another impending arrival in our future Fleet," he told them.

"In a few short years, these five Offshore Patrol Vessels will be busy protecting the security of UK waters and those of our overseas territories."

After trials around Scotland, Forth will be officially handed over to the RN next year, followed by Medway and Trent by the end of the decade with Tamar and Spey completing the quintet – all based in Portsmouth – early next decade.

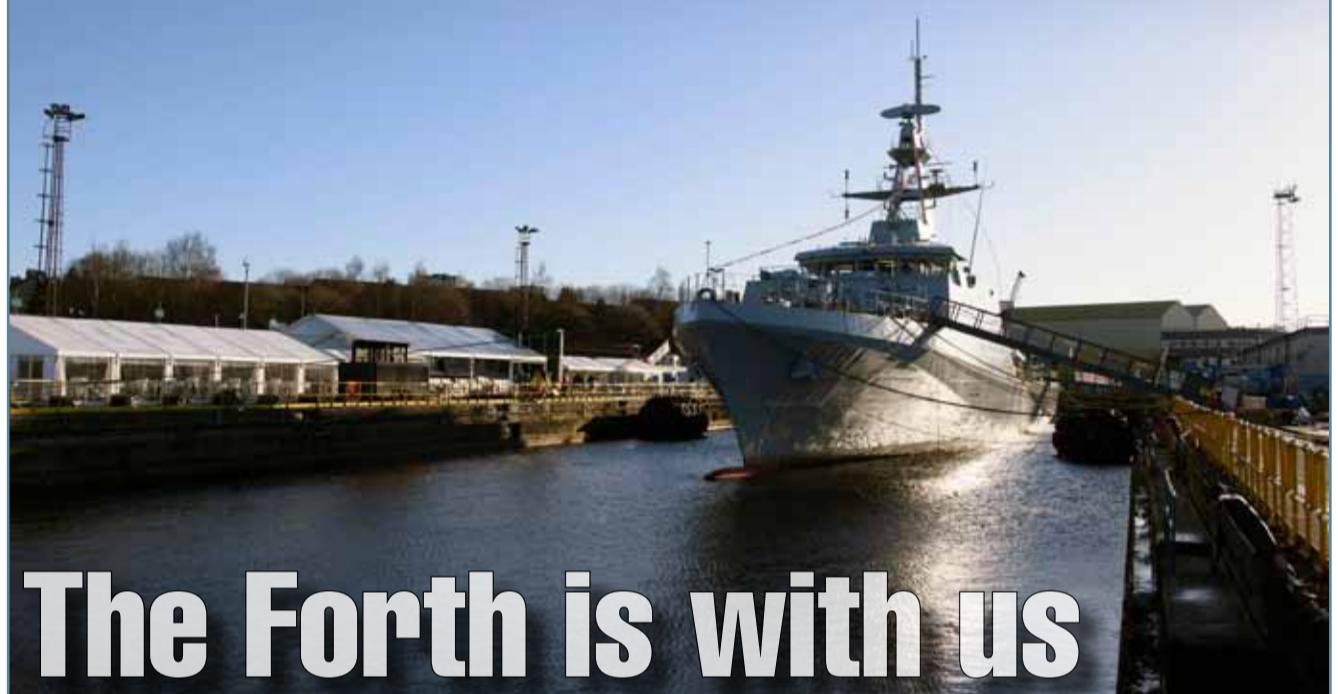
As with the four first-generation Rivers – which have proved to be far more versatile and useful than originally envisaged 15 years ago – the second batch will be expected to perform a wide range of duties at home and abroad: fishery protection, maritime security, counter-narcotics/people trafficking/terrorism and generally acting as the eyes and ears of the RN around the UK on a daily basis.

Instead of a crew of around 45, Forth and her sisters will go to sea with 58 souls aboard (although they can operate with just 36 crew...and have space for 70). All five ships have a flight deck (only Clyde on the first generation does), each capable of accommodating a Wildcat or Merlin.

The new ships are ten metres longer, four knots faster – top speed around 24kts – with the same range of 5,500 miles.

The city of Stirling adopted Forth's predecessor, a wartime submarine depot ship – an affiliation which will now be resurrected.

Picture: John Linton, BAE



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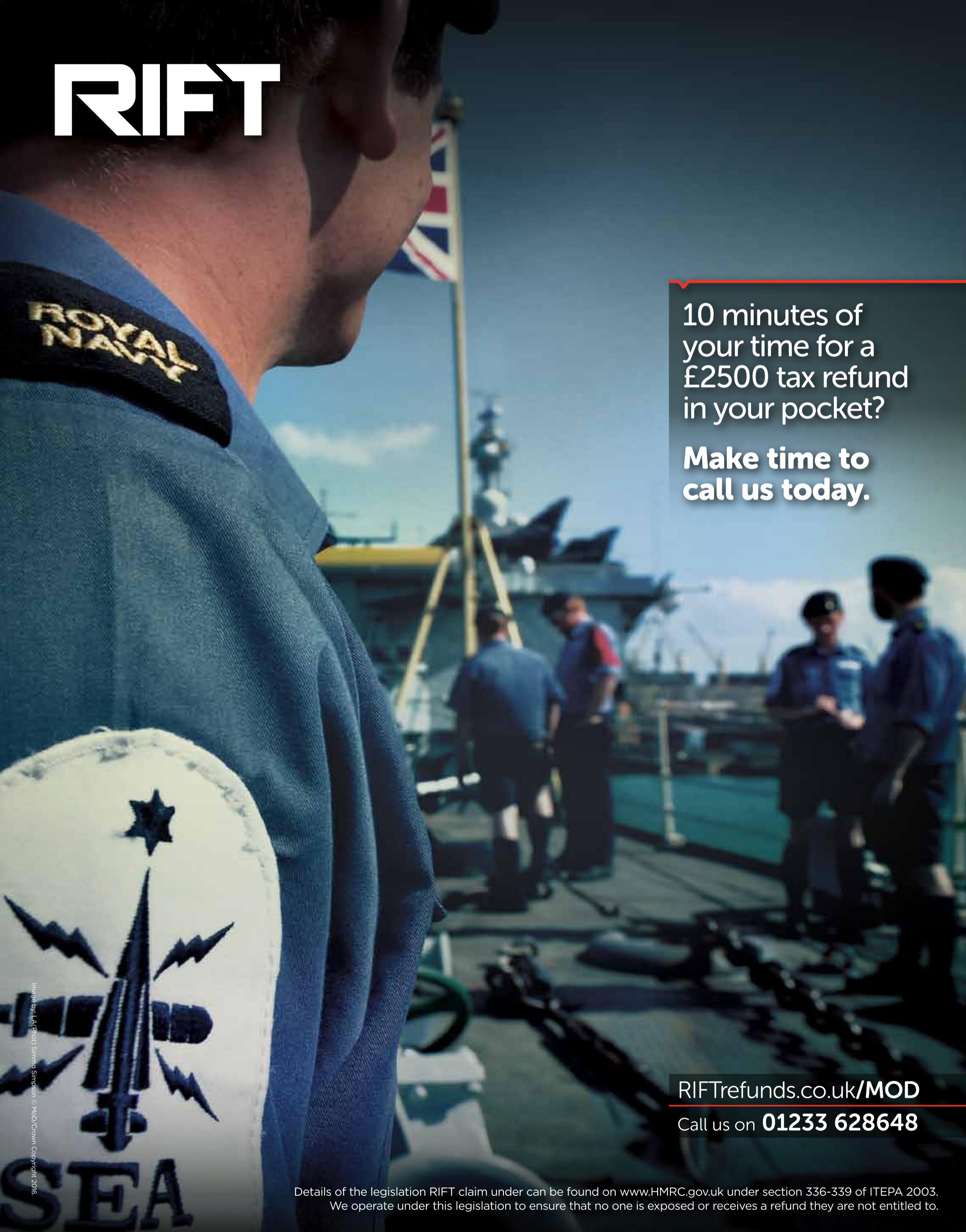
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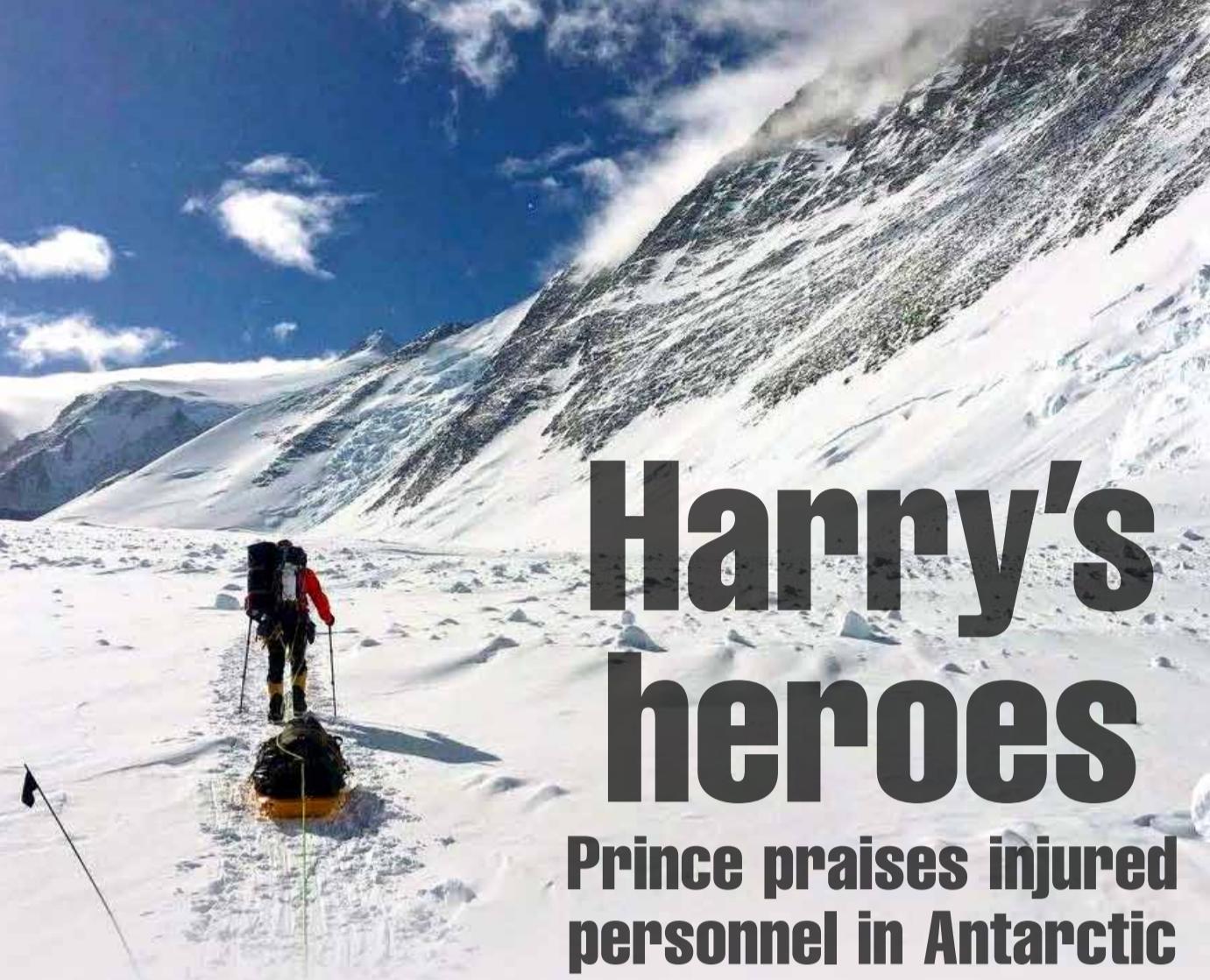


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Harry's heroes

Prince praises injured personnel in Antarctic

NEARLY there... a member of an Antarctic expedition makes his way to the peak of the region's highest mountain.

A five-strong team of serving and former Naval Service personnel reached the top of 16,000ft Mount Vinson – and received a letter of praise from Prince Harry.

"I hope that you are all incredibly proud of what you have achieved," wrote the Prince, as he congratulated the team on overcoming physical and psychological injuries to conquer the top of the bottom of the world.

Team member Capt Tom Heal RM said: "I feel very lucky to have been involved. It was a great expedition with a great bunch of guys, and I'm very pleased to have been asked to support."

Supported by The Endeavour Fund, founded in part by Prince Harry, the injured personnel have previously conquered Greenland, Mount Kilimanjaro, and now Antarctica's highest mountain, to raise £100,000 for Help for Heroes and The Royal Marines Charity.

The event was organised by 65 Degrees North, a charitable organisation helping the rehabilitation of wounded ex-Servicemen and women, by offering them challenging adventures.

Two veterans injured in Afghanistan and their team mates overcame temperatures as low as -40°C to reach the summit of Mount Vinson.

Team member Danny Claricoates joined the Royal Marines in 2003, and was awarded the Military Cross for actions while serving with Plymouth-based 42 Commando in Afghanistan in 2006.



He later re-deployed to Afghanistan with 30 Commando, where he witnessed events for which he would later be diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder and medically discharged from a career he loved, but with no visible wounds he finds it hard to explain himself.

Danny said: "Mental health is a taboo subject; nobody wants to talk about it. Let's just drop the stigma, let's talk about this stuff if it means people can have a better quality of life – that's my genuine intention to help people recognise that."

Cpl James 'Flo' Nightingale, who joined the Royal Marines in 1997, was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Bravery, and completed two tours of Afghanistan where he was wounded by a gunshot to the face.

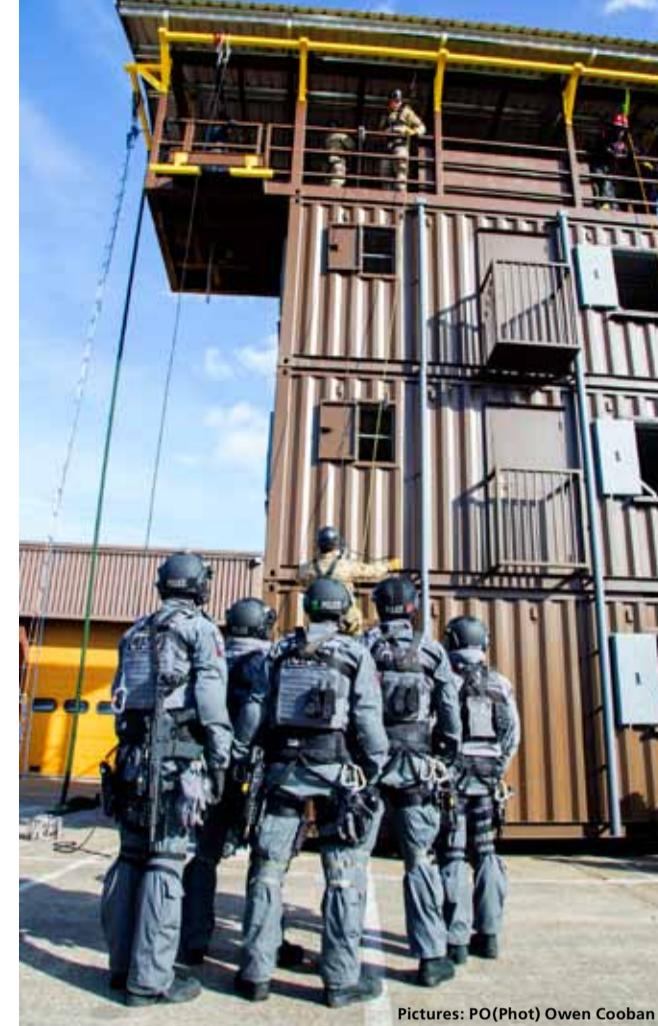
Expedition leader Richard Morgan said: "It proved tough at times, carrying heavy

weights up the mountain in significantly low temperatures and suffering from the effects of altitude tested us all.

"I have seen Danny and Flo grow in confidence and they were a huge asset to the team. Both were integral to the success and displayed the qualities one would expect from Servicemen in the most testing and challenging conditions.

"Taking part in challenging adventures has significant benefits to our wounded, injured and sick Servicemen and women, aiding in their recovery and rehabilitation, increasing skills and confidence and providing them with the opportunity to overcome adversity and prove there is life beyond injury."

In September a team of 15 injured veterans will cycle 800km coast-to-coast along some of the toughest roads in the Pyrenees.



Pictures: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban

Tower tactics to thwart terrorists

THIS is the Royal Marines' – and emergency services' – latest weapon in the war against urban terrorists.

The £200,000 Centre for Urban Tactics And Climbing – CUTAC – will prepare commandos for climbing up, abseiling down and storming buildings in towns and cities.

The four-storey facility, unveiled by Vice Chief of Defence Staff – and Royal Marine – General Sir Gordon Messenger, pictured right, has been designed, built and installed at RMR City of London's HQ in Wandsworth in under ten months.

Although specifically aimed at honing the urban combat skills of commando reservists, plus any other military units which wish to use it, the facility has been designed from the outset with all three of the capital's emergency services in mind to practise rescues in multi-storey buildings.

"This facility is a fantastic addition to our London base – without it we would travel for several hours to get the value of similar training," said Lt Col Ed Moorehouse RM, Commanding Officer of RMR City of London.

"It'll prove to be an essential tool not just for Royal Marines but for all our military colleagues in and around London.



"Moreover, and just as importantly, the blue light services – giving us all a chance to train together, cross-pollinate and swap skills together as well as develop new tactics by sharing this facility."

Among the RM reservists who have been instrumental in the project from the outset is C/Sgt Dave Hill – he's a London firefighter by day and, as a commando, a climbing instructor.

"So between rescuing people and a mountain leader in the Royal Marines, I've combined those skill-sets and helped produce what we have here today," he explained.

"I am very impressed what has been built here, I had no idea it would be like this to be honest from what it looked like on a piece of paper."

The Royal Maritime Club
(Formerly The Royal Sailors' Home Club)



The 153rd Annual General Meeting
of the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth,
will be held in the

Trafalgar Ballroom of the club on
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A big whoosh from Westminster

A DROGUE parachute begins to deploy as a Sting Ray is propelled from its launcher and the Magazine-Launched Torpedo System on HMS Westminster is put through its paces.

Having uncoiled its towed-array sonar – a ‘tail’ hundreds of metres long lined with hydrophones (underwater microphones) which is normally wrapped around a gigantic drum behind the quarterdeck – to listen for any submarine activity, the weapons maintainers and ops room team flashed up the torpedo as well.

The launchers – just forward of the Portsmouth frigate’s hangar – use high pressure to drive Sting Ray out of its tube, before the small parachute deploys and slows its entry into the water.

The system is among a Type 23’s last line of defence against the submarine menace – but like every piece of kit aboard has to be tested as the ‘capital ship’ emerges from a two-year refit.

Her 4.5in gun has been in action, spewing out the maximum 23 rounds a minute in the South Coast Exercise Areas, while the flight deck team conducted trials with a Merlin from Culdrose.

In between all the gunnery/torpedo funnery, the ship’s company somehow squeezed in a Caribbean night to celebrate Commonwealth Day and visits to the Emerald Isle’s two capital cities: firstly a very short stop in Belfast, then a longer stay in Dublin.

After the formalities of a Ceremonial Sunset for VIPs, sailors hit the city... chiefly the Guinness Storehouse to learn about the drink and perhaps sample the odd pint...



THERE are few more iconic sights in the Royal Navy than one of Her Majesty’s Ships set against the backdrop of the Rock.

Accompanied by Gibraltar’s permanent RN presence, patrol boats HMS Sabre and Scimitar, frigate HMS Monmouth conducted a high-speed ‘sovereignty patrol’ of territorial waters, while her Wildcat helicopter ‘Black Knight’ did the same in the skies around the Rock, overflying the peninsula and the airport at the northern edge of the British Overseas Territory.

The sky was crystal clear – unlike Monmouth’s rainy departure from her home port of Plymouth – the waters a beautiful cobalt blue, but rather busy; there were more than 20 merchant ships in Gib’s eastern and western anchorages.

Patrol complete, the Type 23 frigate berthed next to The Tower and the ship’s company headed ashore to enjoy the delights of Gib (Rock race, Barbary apes, Casemates Square, wartime tunnels, Donkey’s Flip Flop, Mad Monk, chicken on a fist...).

As well as the first port visit of the deployment Gib was the first foreign visit for many of Monmouth’s junior sailors, including AB(Sea) Kristoffer Auld.

“Gibraltar has a certain mystique about it and everyone in the Navy has a good Gib story,” he said. “I’m really pleased to have visited this part of the UK and it will always be that little bit more special for me as it’s my first foreign stop.”

He and his shipmates used the 1,000-mile passage from their native Devonport to begin flexing their muscles for the core part of the deployment, which begins in earnest once leaving Gib.

The frigate has been equipped with heavy machine-guns – “50 cals” after their .5 calibre shells – to bolster her close-in defences when conducting counter trafficking and smuggling patrols in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.

Monmouth is the first Type 23 to be equipped with the guns, mounted on the bridge wing and unleashed in open waters off the Portuguese coast.

“It’s an impressive weapon. Powerful and rapid firing it offers my gunners a lot of stopping power should we have to defend the Black Duke from attack. You wouldn’t want to be in its way, that’s for sure!” said PO(AWW) Leighton ‘Jan’ Bartlett, who oversaw the first shoot.

On the trigger was AB Jordan ‘Taff’ Elliot, who has recently moved into the above-water warfare branch: “It was great fun to fire and set on a glorious afternoon like today’s it’s exactly the sort of thing I came into the branch to do.”

Also tested was her ScanEagle miniature eyes in the sky; the small drone has proved to be a crucial asset in monitoring shipping in the Gulf, beaming live camera footage directly into ship’s operations room.

Deploying marks the end of 18 months of demanding trials, tests and training, 18 months which have helped to imbue the 220 souls aboard a ship originally designed for about 180-190 (the numbers are bolstered in part by the presence of a specialist Royal Marines boarding team to conduct searches of suspicious vessels) with a ‘keen fighting spirit’ in the words of her Commanding Officer Cdr Ian Feasey.

On sailing from Gibraltar, Monmouth continued east. She joins HMS Echo on the international Operation Sophia, the response of Europe’s military to the migrant problem in North Africa and the central Mediterranean, before passing through Suez for the core of the deployment dealing with terrorism/piracy/drug trafficking/arms smuggling in the Indian Ocean and Gulf.

Pictures: LPhot Caroline Davies and Cpl Tim Hammond, RAF



849's field trip

A SEA King from Culdrose circles another on the ground after an unscheduled landing in a field on the edge of the picturesque Brittany seaside village of Brignogan-Plages – an exciting, if unplanned, start to two weeks in France for the Baggiers training alongside the battle-honed fliers of the Charles de Gaulle carrier air group.

The Navy’s ‘eyes in the sky’ hopped the 120 miles from their home near Helston to Landivisiau, home of the French Navy’s carrier strike jets, to share Breton skies with Rafale strike fighters, practising skills which will be crucial when HMS Queen Elizabeth and her F-35 jump jets enter service.

849 Naval Air Squadron sent two Sea King Mk7s across the Channel for Exercise Skinner’s Gold, only for one to develop an oil leak – luckily within sight of the French coast.

The crew set it down on the outskirts of Brignogan-Plages, 20 miles northeast of Brest and a dozen from its destination, slap bang in a field where holidaymakers are warned not to camp.

Far from admonishing the fliers, locals – led by the mayor – were quickly on the scene, offering the crew food and drink, before French commandos guarded the site overnight while spare parts were flown over from Culdrose. 849’s engineers had the helicopter fixed and ready to take her place in the exercise within 24 hours.

The Baggiers serve both as the Navy’s airborne early warning against air attack and the long-range eyes helping to direct friendly aircraft on to targets, be they enemy fighters or armour and troop concentrations on the ground – so powerful is the radar and the software fitted aboard the veteran helicopter it’s equally adept looking up or down.

It’s an ability the Sea Kings will shortly pass on to the new Crowsnest Merlin and any opportunity to practise is avidly seized, especially as the French pilots have just returned from a front-line deployment, flying from the deck of their nation’s

flagship and attacking ISIS targets in the Middle East.

“Their pilots and crews were able to impart invaluable knowledge about live carrier strike group operations and current tactics. With the Queen Elizabeth and F-35 Lightning II now looming large on the horizon, these are vital preparations for the Royal Navy,” explained observer Lt Ben Selwood.

“For us, this was a rare opportunity for the Royal Navy’s only airborne fighter controllers to work with maritime fourth-generation fighters.”

The first week gave the crews the chance to control many different tactical scenarios including air interdiction – guiding friendly fighters on to enemy fighters – and ‘air policing’, maintaining no-fly zones as British jets did over southern Iraq in the 1990s, for example.

Thanks to a data link, the Sea King crews were able to provide fighter pilots with all the information they needed about what was happening in the sky, on land and on the sea – giving them the upper hand when they entered the fight.

The second week of Skinner’s Gold was rather hampered by mist and weather, but still allowed the helicopter squadron’s most junior observers, Lts James Clark and Ben Selwood – the very last trainees in a Sea King family stretching back to 1969 – to complete their personal instruction. They’re now fully-qualified Airborne Surveillance and Control observers.

“What a great chance to come to France and train with some of our closest allies. The opportunity to hone my fighter control skills with such advanced aircraft was incredibly challenging but also very rewarding,” said Lt Clark.

“I’m extremely proud to have completed my training as a fully-qualified observer. These are great times.”

849 will return to Landivisiau in June for NATO’s Tiger Meet, with more than 50 fast jets from 20 different Allied nations converging on Brittany for major aerial war games.



Picture: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, CHF

Let's go to work...

FLEET Air Arm and Royal Marines pilots and aircrewmen stroll away from their ‘steed’ after earning their wings – the end of a journey 18 months long at its shortest, three or four years for those going from civilians to qualified Merlin pilots.

All 14 successful candidates had completed six months of training on the Merlin Mk3, from navigating the helicopter at low altitude, flying whilst wearing Night Vision Goggles, carrying loads of up to six tonnes beneath the fuselage, mountain flying, up to amphibious operations, reaching its climax with five intense days’ of assessment in the field, Merlin Storm.

Crews were expected to evacuate an ‘ambassador’ from BRNC in Dartmouth as enemy troops threatened the college before focus shifted to Rolleston Camp on Salisbury Plain for combined training with the red berets of 2 Para and the Gurkhas.

A SUB lieutenant aboard destroyer leader HMS Swift examines a German shell case after one of few decisive naval encounters of the Great War.

Our monthly rewind to WW1 with the help of the seemingly-endless photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum brings us to April 1917 and the height of the German submarine campaign against Britain.

Since February 1, U-boats had waged an unrestricted war against shipping bound for Britain, no longer abiding by the international laws and sparing neutral vessels. Now, anything was fair game.

Unleashing the U-boats proved a disaster – for Britain in the short term (losses jumped two and a half times in just a couple of months), and for Germany in the long run, for the submarine campaign helped bring the United States into the conflict.

Devastating though their unrestricted campaign was, it might have ravaged Britain's merchant fleet even more had the submarines not had to sail around the British Isles to reach their hunting grounds.

Standing in their way, the Dover Barrage – minefields, anti-torpedo nets, guns, searchlights – protected by the Dover patrol, a hodge-podge naval force of destroyers, torpedo boats, converted trawlers.

German surface ships were based just 75 miles up the coast in Zeebrugge – and were frequently dispatched to gnaw at the British defences.

In October 1916, they had scored some success, giving the Dover Patrol a very bloody nose in what was dubbed the Battle of the Dover Strait.

Six months later and both navies had reinforced their flotillas on opposite sides of the Channel.

They had skirmished since January, mostly in the Germans' favour, though with little major impact, but on the night of April 20-21 1917, the *Flandern Flottille* dispatched a dozen of its latest torpedo destroyers in two formations of six to cause havoc in the narrows. One group would bombard Dover, the other Calais.

The codebreakers of Room 40 – forerunners of Bletchley Park and today's GCHQ – heard nothing, so



on the night in question only weak forces were on guard. They would prove to be more than a match for the Germans.

His Majesty's Ships Swift and Broke were flotilla leaders. Swift was a one-off, a rather expensive experiment which turned out to be costly to run, underarmed and not as quick as her name suggested. By 1917, she was even slower but more formidable, thanks to the fitting of a 6in main gun; no British destroyer

was ever more heavily armed.

Broke had suffered badly in the chaotic night fighting at Jutland. Out of control after a pummelling from German guns, she smashed into HMS Sparrowhawk, losing her bow in the process.

Repaired and rebuilt, Broke was sent south to Dover with a new commanding officer, Cdr 'Teddy' Evans – who would have shared Capt Scott's fate in the Antarctic but was ordered to turn back by the

expedition leader before the final fateful push on the South Pole.

With the first flashes of gunfire around midnight on April 20-21, Swift and Broke immediately responded, bearing down on the Germans at full speed off the Goodwin Sands. There was little subtlety in their plan: ram the enemy.

Swift missed her intended target, the German destroyer G42, but did torpedo and sink another, G85.

Broke, however, smashed straight

into G42 amidships, all but tearing the German vessel in two. For a good while, the two ships were locked together and either to save themselves, or seize an enemy vessel, G42's crew tried to storm the Broke. They were repelled in scenes not dissimilar from Trafalgar: sailors armed with rifles and cutlasses forced the Germans back before for the second time in the war, Broke managed to extricate herself from another vessel.

She suffered 21 dead and three dozen wounded, her stern was contorted, her funnels "resembled sieves" from the number of hits they received, and every man in the engine room had been killed by a direct hit.

And still the day had been won. G42 joined G85 on the seabed and 140 German prisoners were brought back to Britain.

Most importantly, the Royal Navy had driven off a superior foe; the Kaiser's destroyers would not return to the strait to challenge British supremacy for another ten months.

Teddy Evans became a national hero – 'Evans of the Broke'. When his ship returned to Dover – under tow – she was "cheered frantically by all the ships in harbour".

He would rise to the rank of full admiral by WW2, be created a peer – Baron Mountevans of Chelsea – and draw up the rules which continue to govern British wrestling to this day.

Evans' foe also became a national hero. G42's commander Kapitänleutnant Bernd von Arnim went down with his ship.

His self-sacrifice was honoured a generation later by a re-born German Navy. The 11th of a class of 16 new destroyers was named after the WW1 captain. She proved no luckier than her namesake. Trapped by overwhelming British forces at Narvik in April 1940, she was driven up a fjord and scuttled by her crew. Her wreck slowly decayed until broken up in the early 1960s.

■ This photograph (Q 18219) is one of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs, or by calling 0207 416 5309.

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DRIVING THE ROYAL NAVY COMMUNITY
FORWARD ONE JOURNEY AT A TIME

In Portsmouth and Culdrose preparations are well in hand to ensure both bases and sailors will be

FIT for the Queen



● The USNS Robert E Peary berths at Princess Royal Jetty in Portsmouth Naval Base

Picture: LPhot Barry Swainsbury

THE first ship to use the new jetty designed for HMS Queen Elizabeth makes her way alongside through the mist.

The USNS Robert E Peary – a Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship named after the Arctic explorer – moored at the revamped Princess Royal Jetty, the future home of the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

The US ship, which at 210 metres in length is 70 metres shorter than the carriers, was kept at anchor outside Portsmouth Harbour until thick fog started to lift.

The Peary's arrival marked the end of work on the jetty, a milestone in preparations at the base where £100m has been invested by the Ministry of Defence ahead of the arrival of the 65,000-tonne Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales.

Bad weather scuppered the initial plan to test the new brows – or gangways – at the jetty. Instead Ministry of Defence police carried out security exercises while the 40,000-ton Peary remained at anchor in the Solent.

"This is the first dress rehearsal, moving from where it has all been bricks and mortar and the physical preparations, to now putting ourselves through the process of the people that are going to work it," said Portsmouth Naval Base Cdre Jeremy Rigby.

"In my experience, bricks and mortar have never thrown a single heaving line in their time and have never gone on board and fixed a ship."

"It all comes down to the team, the workforce and the people, so we need to make sure that before the ship arrives we have gone through and deconflicted all those little bits and pieces."

The Peary, motto 'King of the Team', returned to the jetty a few days later to test the new fenders.

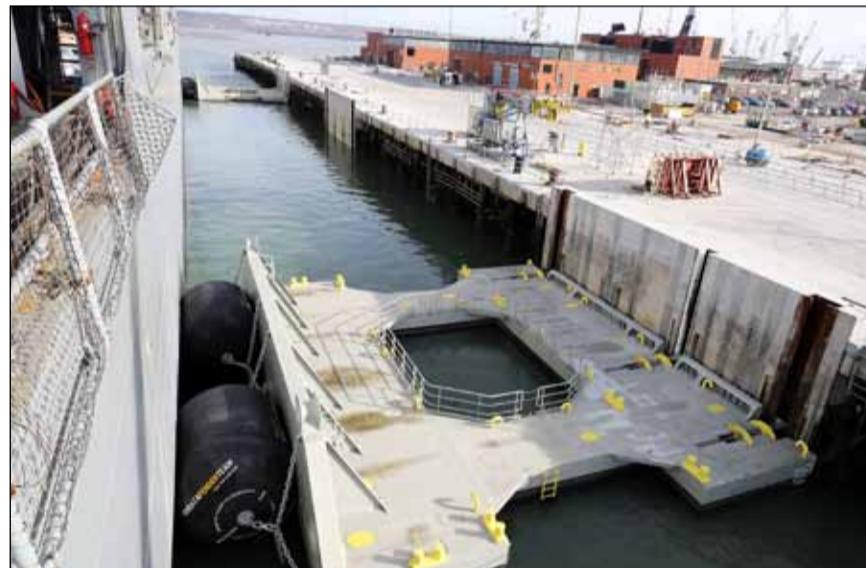
The fender spacer units operate via hydraulic arms that slot into the new jetty and move up and down with the tides to protect the carriers and keep them around 20 metres away from the jetty.

The fenders will also serve as a platform for Royal Navy divers carrying out security checks.

The USNS Robert E Peary was visiting to help with the Familiarisation, Integration and Testing – FIT – programme which will allow personnel to practise and refine operating procedures, along with emergency scenarios, designed for the new carriers, currently under construction at Rosyth.

As the Peary left Portsmouth, the base

Naval base ready for carrier



● The new fender spacer units are tested at Princess Royal Jetty Picture: LPhot Iggy Roberts

welcomed its Commodore-in-Chief the Princess Royal as she unveiled a plaque to officially name the berth.

Visitors and members of the ships' companies will arrive at the jetty via the revamped Ark Royal Building, where airport-style queuing will form part of the new security procedures.

Work to overhaul the base began in 2015. It saw parts of the former Middle Slip Jetty, some dating back 90 years, being ripped out and replaced. Overall 276m of jetty has been reinforced with more than 3,300 tonnes of new steel.

In addition, a new high-voltage electrical supply centre – which will power the two carriers when they are alongside – has been fitted and the harbour channel widened.

Dredging work, which so far has involved the removal of three million cubic metres of clay, sand and gravel, is to continue for a few months. Navigational lights and a high-voltage electrical supply are also part of the huge programme of works.

QEC Infrastructure Director Capt Iain Greenlees said: "This jetty lies at the very

heart of the preparations for the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth and the wider development of the base for this century. It is tangible evidence of how close we are to the dawn of the QEC era."

A Union Jack and a White Ensign have been installed 280m apart on the jetty to indicate the length of the new carriers.

Chris Allcock, QE support project manager at BAE, said: "Today has been exciting because it's the first time we have been able to get on to the jetty and test, in real anger, the processes and procedures we're planning to use for the carrier."

The infrastructure project has been delivered by BAE Systems, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and VolkerStevin.

DIO Project Manager Philip Wise said: "I am delighted that the works to the jetty are completed. It is a crucial element of the £100m infrastructure package being delivered to support the arrival of the carriers into their home port of Portsmouth. We are looking forward to seeing the first of the ships berthing against the new and improved jetty later this year."



Fibre-glass class

THIS is the Navy's first stealth fighter squadron. In use. On UK soil.

Aircraft handlers from HMS Queen Elizabeth can shunt, move and marshal full-size representative models of the F-35B Lightning II in preparation for doing the same with the real thing next year.

Four Ground Training Aids – we can't call them F-35s because they're not (although they are aesthetically similar to the Lockheed Martin jets) – have been delivered to the School of Flight Deck Operations at Culdrose to give flight deck teams an idea of the size and weight of the new aircraft.

Handlers can also practise extracting injured pilots from the cockpit thanks to the four models, built by Cornish firm Gateguards (UK).

The replicas are fitted with internal water tanks which allow handlers to cope with weights between 14 and 25 tonnes, simulating the various payloads the new fighter can carry.

"They are really life-like, impressive and above all they give a sense of realism to the training here," said CPO(AH) Paul Ranson.

"It's good to get people getting used to moving them around the deck, alongside Harriers running with all the noise and the smell. And for the fire-fighters, there's the challenge of lifting a 16-stone dummy from the cockpit."

The models were shifted by road by the Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Squadron, the MOD's experts on moving aircraft (prompting a slightly bemused response from the county's motorists) to Culdrose, where they were assembled, tested and finally rolled onto the dummy deck – the replica flight deck which gives aircraft handlers an idea of the sounds, smells, and dangers of a working carrier deck.

With the new models being little more than fibre glass and water, the school will continue to run old Sea Harriers for just that experience.

Even so, the noise from a Harrier at take-off or landing 'only' reaches 125-130 decibels – equivalent to someone with a pneumatic drill hammering away next to you.

The F-35B – the jump jet variant being acquired by the UK – will touch 155 dB, louder than Lewis Hamilton's F1 Mercedes racing past you at full throttle at Silverstone.

For now, however, instructors and trainees are simply glad to have something tangible to use on the dummy deck.

34-year-old LA(AH) Richard Fisher from Plymouth was one of the first handlers from HMS Queen Elizabeth to get up close to the models.

"In the past I've sat through briefings and wondered if it's ever going to happen. And here it is," he said.

"Putting the new jet next to the Harrier gives you an idea of the size and scale of it. It's bigger than expected.

"You start to realise just how big the whole carrier project is. The trials with the real F-35 are going to be amazing, bringing the Navy into the future and making us a real force to be reckoned with."

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Culdrose



Missile milestone for Lightning II jet

A HEAT-SEEKING British missile is fired from the F-35B Lightning II off California in a milestone for the strike fighter programme.

The firing trials of the MBDA Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile – ASRAAM – was the first time a British-designed missile was fired from the aircraft.

The Royal Navy's new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth is due to take delivery of her first F-35Bs next year.

The trials were overseen from Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland – home of the Integrated Test Force Logistic Test and Evaluation Team – and Edwards Air Force Base

in California – home to 17(R) Test and Evaluation Squadron, commanded by Royal Navy pilot Cdr Ian Tidball.

MBDA is currently under contract, awarded in 2016, to produce infra-red guided air-to-air missiles for the UK's F-35s.

The missile flies at over Mach 3 – 2,301mph, the equivalent of flying from London to Portsmouth in 100 seconds – and its sleek airframe and powerful motor ensure it can fly faster and further than competing short range air-to-air missiles.

The ASRAAM's sophisticated seeker and software is designed to defeat current and future threats. It is already in service with the RAF's

Tornado and Typhoon aircraft.

At Pax the UK has a team of 20 people working for the ITF on every aspect of test flying, led by Cdr Toby McCann, a maintenance test observer, and consisting of three test pilots (one RN), a mission systems specialist, two aircraft engineering officers (one RN), nine maintainers (four RN) and four engineering specialists from defence firm QinetiQ.





NOT even German bombers could stop the last act in tanker RFA Gold Rover's career.

Just minutes after RN bomb disposal experts had safely moved a Luftwaffe bomb, the tanker's 43-year active life came to an end as she made her way into Portsmouth and Fountain Lake Jetty, where over the coming weeks all things useful will be stripped out as the ship is prepared for the breaker's yard.

Given her length of service, the tanker was permitted the rare honour – for a ship in the RFA – of flying a decommissioning pennant, a long, very thin version

of the Blue Ensign auxiliaries hoist. Based on a combination of the length of the career and length of the ship, it stretched for 140 metres (460ft).

Dredging in Portsmouth Harbour to clear the way for the Navy's new carriers dug up yet another relic of the Blitz, this time a 250kg bomb snared by the excavator head of the barge carrying out the work.

That led to the harbour being closed for three hours – bringing all traffic (ferries, warships, trains) to a halt and causing jams city-wide... which prevented a good few well-wishers reaching Round Tower to see the tanker's final entry.

But there was still a sizeable group gathered at the top of the historic fortification, cameras and smartphones at the ready and the RFA's standard tied firmly to the railings, to see tugs usher the venerable vessel safely in on a blustery winter's day.

"All five Rovers always had a reputation as happy ships – in part because of small ship's company and because of the jobs that they tended to do all around the world," said Capt Paul Minter, one of Gold Rover's



Pictures: LPhotos Dave Jenkins and Barry Swainsbury



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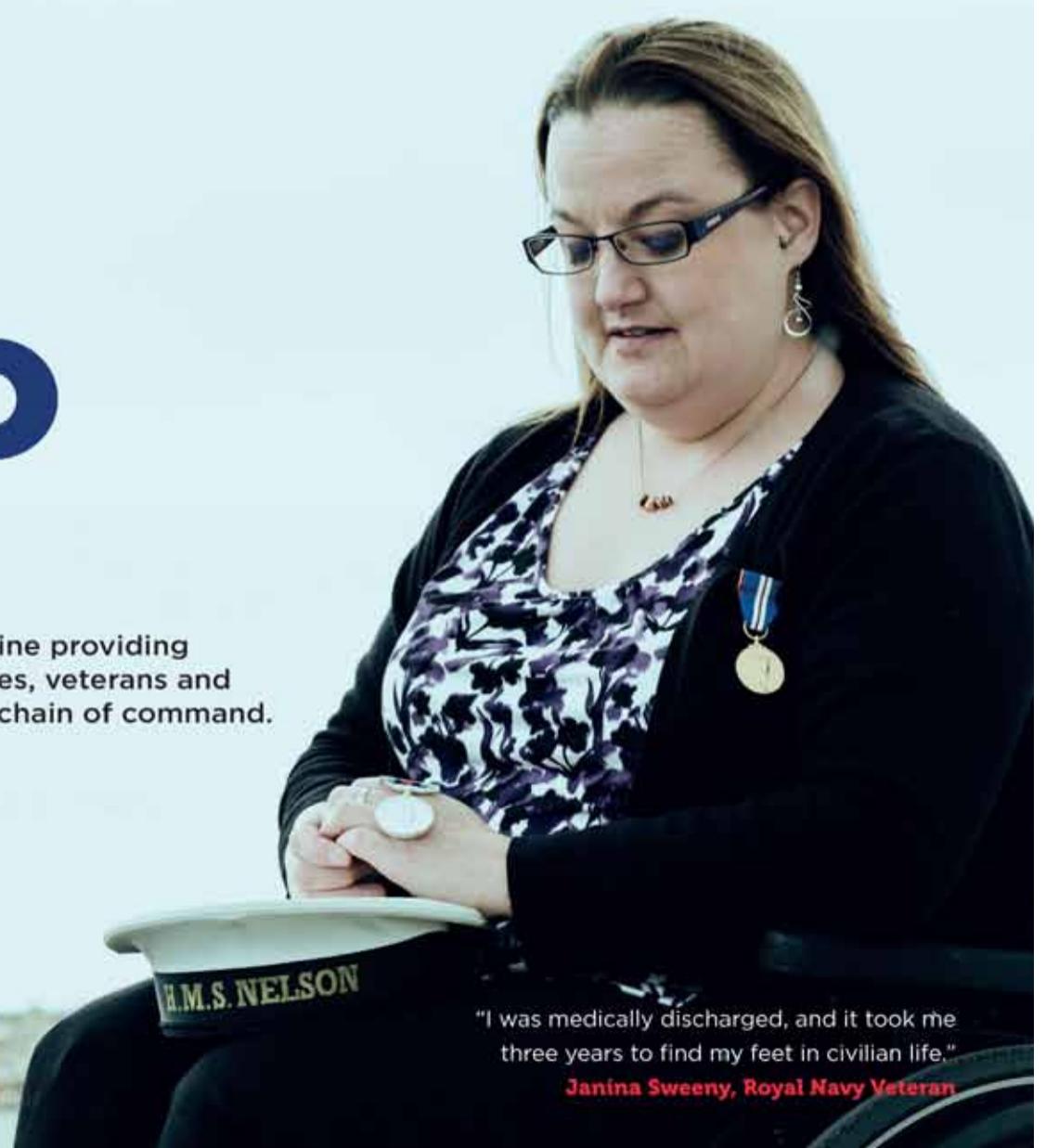
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"I was medically discharged, and it took me three years to find my feet in civilian life."

Janina Sweeny, Royal Navy Veteran

former commanding officers.

"It meant they were very sought-after ships."

Also bidding farewell was the head of the RFA, Cdre Duncan Lamb who served in, but didn't captain, Gold Rover.

"This is a significant period in the history of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – and perhaps a moment to reflect as we reach the end of the Rover class," he said.

"It's really quite sad to see them go out of service – but it's also an opportunity to look to the future at the Tide-class ships."

Right now, the first

of those – Tidespring – is on a 16,000-mile odyssey from the shipbuilder in Korea, crossing the Pacific, passing through Panama then across the Atlantic to the UK for final fitting out.

Rear Admiral Tarrant said that like the rest of her class, Gold Rover had been "small, simple and effective" and would be sorely missed.

Almost 43 years to the day

that she entered service, the Blue Ensign was lowered for the last

time by sailors Matt Bromage

and Tom Walker.

While Gold Rover awaits her fate, the former Blue Rover continues to serve the Portuguese Navy, and the oldest, Green Rover, still flies the Indonesian flag as KRI Arun... 48 years after first pumping fuel into the tanks of a British warship.



more Roving

That was the month, that was

The **Three-Day Week** – introduced by the government to conserve energy use – had just ended. It helped to end the premiership of Edward Heath and put Labour's **Harold Wilson** back in No.10.

Paper Lace were number one in the singles chart with **Billy Don't Be a Hero**.

Paul Newman and Robert Redford's Oscar-winning tale of commen **The Sting** was the biggest draw at the box office. A cinema ticket cost **45p**.

Leeds United were on their way to lifting the Division One title – the equivalent of today's Premiership Trophy.

Daytime TV was dominated by programmes for school and ended around midnight with the **National Anthem**.

Youngsters loved the new children's show **Bagpuss**.

Grown-ups tuned into **This is Your Life**, **Benny Hill** and **Tommy Cooper** – which were far more popular than **Coronation Street**

The **Ford Cortina** was the best-selling car.

A pint of milk (in a glass bottle, with a foil top, delivered to your doorstep by someone called a 'milkman') would set you back **5p**.

A pint of beer was **20p**.

You could also pick up a packet of 20 cigarettes for **20p** while you could work, rest and play all day with a Mars bar for **6p**.

A first-class stamp cost **3½p** (half pennies were still in circulation until 1984).

Britain's most popular newspaper was the soaraway **Sun** – yours six days a week for **3p**, while its Labour-supporting rival the **Daily Mirror** cost a penny more.

A gallon of petrol – this is a pre-metric era – cost **49½p** (about **11p** per litre)

The average worker took home **£32** every week.

And the average house could be snapped up for just under **£10,000**



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all the fun of Jufair

STATISTICS.

You can glaze over them.

They can be baffling.

But use the right ones in the correct context and they can have an impact.

Here's a couple for starters.

Last year naval forces confiscated enough weapons and ammunition from smugglers in the Indian Ocean and Gulf to equip an entire brigade of Daesh fighters – it's not just troops on the ground and air strikes which are gnawing at the fundamentalists.

And those ships also seized enough drugs to give everyone in Australia one 'hit'. That's 23 million people. A lot of hits. A lot of money.

Want some more?

When rebel forces in Yemen were threatening ships passing through the Bab al Mandeb strait at the foot of the Red Sea, HMS Daring was dispatched to escort merchant vessels.

Seventeen times Daring escorted ships through the narrows, her sailors at action stations on each occasion (97 hours in all – or four days).

By the time the mission ended, 650,000 tonnes of merchant shipping had passed safely – the equivalent of three WW2 convoys.

Such facts and figures give an idea of the variety – and complexity – of the daily mission of the RN's senior front-line HQ, the UK Maritime Component Command (commonly abbreviated to UKMCC).

They don't give an idea of the size of area the commander, Commodore Will Warrender, and his team have to keep an eye on.

At any one time, an estimated 3,500 ships are passing through UKMCC's extensive domain.

Extensive? East to the shores of Sri Lanka, south almost to Madagascar; you can fit Europe (as far east as St Petersburg at least) in the Indian Ocean segment. From Bahrain to the Bab Al Mandeb, it's 2,000 miles.

Typically more than 100 of those ships fly the Red Duster, with around 4,000 Britons spread around the many vessels.

Another figure: 24 months. That's how long the commodore has been out here (he's due to hand over in the summer).

In that time, three things east of Suez have changed substantially:

- the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (commonly known as the 'Iran nuclear deal') – it might not set dinner conversations alight in the UK, but it's had a considerable impact in this part of the world;
- civil war in Yemen which overspilled into the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden last year when rebel forces attacked shipping, prompting an international military response;
- and construction of the future Jufair complex which will be in use by the year's end.

The immediate concern is the conflict in Yemen. If the Bab al Mandeb Strait closes, it will have global repercussions: on fuel and goods arriving in the UK, yes (adding about five weeks to the journey time). And elsewhere in the Western world.

But it would also shut the Suez Canal – what point is a canal which leads to a dead end?

And that canal generates around one third of Egypt's wealth.

"There is still a risk to shipping in the Bab al Mandeb," says Cdre Warrender. "It's a volatile region and has become even more so over the past six months."

Which is why HMS Daring was sent to the strait late last year to protect merchantmen.

The Daring mission was 'national tasking' – carrying out the orders of UK plc.

But the Commander UKMCC is also deputy commander of the Combined Maritime Forces, the second of the three headquarters based in Bahrain (the US Fifth Fleet completes the trio).

It draws on personnel and warships from 31 nations (soon to be 32 with Sri Lanka throwing its hat in the ring).

It runs the three Combined Task Forces out here: 150 (maritime security/counter piracy), 151 (piracy), 152 (Gulf security). They're all interconnected.

"All the criminal activity in this region

is connected in some way to terrorism," says Cdre Warrender.

Drugs and arms trafficking grab the headlines – and are pretty obviously linked with insurgency.

But right now, the Combined Maritime Forces are also clamping down on other smuggling; charcoal from Somalia to Gulf states is *de rigueur*.

Having lost major hauls in 2016, the smugglers are responding. "It's getting harder to find contraband," says Cdr Bow Wheaton, one of 15 Brits on the CMF staff.

Thanks to the concerted international effort by both navies and merchant shipping, Somali piracy has all but been eradicated.

"There were no successful piracy attacks last year," Cdr Wheaton adds.

"But Somalia remains a failed state. Piracy is only suppressed. If we were to leave tomorrow, it would probably come back."

CMF accounts for the smallest number of 1,200 or so Royal Navy and Royal Marines in theatre on a typical day.

Their efforts are mostly directed by the 75 or so men and women on the UKMCC staff, mostly RN and mostly full-timers; but there are reservists here too, RAF, Army.

"The tempo out here is probably greater than it is back in the UK – we're on an operational footing," says Capt Tom Guy, UKMCC's chief-of-staff and the commodore's deputy.

"It certainly feels busier than anything we do in home waters."

And he should know as a former skipper of frigate HMS Northumberland.

"This is the sharp end of the Royal Navy. It's what we've trained for and it is making a difference."

It can be a hard sell. The British people don't really notice what goes on out here.

They raise their heads momentarily if there's a pirate or drugs bust, but otherwise pay little attention.

And 'Join the Navy, see the Gulf' isn't perhaps the most promising of recruiting slogans...

The UKMCC staff try to organise the programme for visiting vessels so that they get alongside "in interesting places" as reward for and a break from their hard work: chiefly Dubai, Muscat and Abu Dhabi.

And adventurous training weeks are laid on for minehunter crews in Oman.

"Few people volunteer to come to Bahrain, but if you do end up out here, you'll find the work is very rewarding – it's a worthwhile thing that we're doing," says Capt Guy.

It's grown enormously from a handful of people in the wake of the 9/11 atrocities in 2001 and portable buildings attempting to serve as an ops centre to the RN's major overseas base.

"The UK's presence out here is substantial – and it is only going to increase," says Cdre Warrender.

"This part of the world remains incredibly important to us as a Navy and a nation."

"And the contribution made by our sailors and Royal Marines is hugely appreciated by everyone out here. I'm told that on a daily basis."

Tangible evidence of that commitment can be found a few hundred yards from UKMCC's headquarters, right by the water's edge, the future HMS Jufair (officially it's the Mina Salman Support Facility until commissioned).

When announced 18 months ago, it was billed as the RN's first overseas base since the withdrawal from East of Suez.

Jufair is not a full naval base. There are no dry docks here. It's a support facility: accommodation, admin, workshops, warehouses.

And it is *not* British soil unlike, say, the bases on Cyprus, rather Bahraini land donated by its king (who fondly remembers the old establishment and looks forward to its resurrection) to Britain.

It has its limitations too. HMS Queen Elizabeth will not be able to come alongside at Mina Salman – it's too shallow; she'll have to anchor nearby, like the US super-carriers when they make their rare port visits.

Otherwise, the facilities at Jufair will



● First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones surveys the Jufair site from the balcony of the welfare block with project manager Cdr Jim Morley and (right) the complex as it appeared at the end of January

be able to cater for the new carrier – and better support all British ships in theatre.

This time last year, workers were still clearing away old sheds and warehouses. Today several three-storey cream accommodation blocks have risen on the site, plus a waterfront storage and engineering complex, clustered around a central welfare/recreation/entertainment complex.

From November this will be home to all Bahrain-based British personnel. No more living in hotels and apartments for staff – or cooking for themselves.

The aim is also to give crews of the four minehunters out here a break from the spartan conditions aboard by moving ashore when undergoing lengthy periods of maintenance (though not during short breaks in harbour, for the ships themselves are determined to maintain the strong camaraderie aboard.)

On a daily basis around 200 men and women will be living on site.

The complex is designed to accommodate just over 300, or nearly 550 for short periods if the transit block is used and empty bed spaces across the site are occupied.

Two VIP suites have been allocated for senior visitors.

Most sailors and marines based in Bahrain will enjoy modern rooms with either en suite bathrooms, or sharing heads/showers with a neighbouring cabin, and it's all air conditioned with WiFi throughout.

In the centre, an all ranks galley/dining room, rest areas for junior/senior rates and officers, games room, two gyms, a shop and a 130-seat conference/function room/cinema, a BFBS studio, education centre and a couple of terraces to sit out on.

Finally there'll be an all-weather five-a-side pitch with a shaded area for spectators, and a pit for barbecues.

Key to Jufair's future is its past. Since the new establishment's inception, those behind it have been determined to include the history of the previous Jufair.

Navy News readers responded generously to an appeal for memorabilia, photographs and bits of life in the Gulf half a century ago, many of which will be incorporated into the new facility as displays and decorations.

Among the mementos to feature, the last Ensign flown and the Jufair peribuoys, loaned by the son of a former Royal Navy pilot and HMS Jufair wardroom member, Mike Stokes.

He and his daughter Charlotte were given a tour of the burgeoning complex – bringing back memories of sailing off the



● UKMCC Commander Cdre Will Warrender (left) with the senior US Naval officer in the Gulf, Fifth Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Kevin Donegan



Bahraini coast several decades ago.

On the operational front, a huge shed is starting to take shape for supplies, spare parts, engineering workshops. It's three times the size of the existing warehouse used by the Forward Support Unit, who provide the day-to-day engineering assistance for RN vessels, and it's right next to the jetty, not half a mile away like the existing structure.

While the store rooms will be used by the Navy predominantly, they could also be used by other government departments – DfID could house

humanitarian aid supplies here, for example.

"Getting a first permanent facility since 1971 is a massive step forward," says Cdr Jim Morley, project manager.

"Moving everyone on to one site will make a big difference."

"It will allow Naval personnel to reinvigorate their sense of esprit de corps."

"This is going to be a major facility in the Middle East. These are the bricks and mortar that shows our commitment to this region."



M(n)e and my shadow

SILHOUETTED against an inky blue sky in south-west Scotland, Royal Marines march down a gravel track towards their bivouac for the night.

Routine business for the green berets? Absolutely.

Except 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group, who are more at home on ships, submarines and bases than in the wilds.

The 550-strong Faslane-based unit performs the most important duty of any military personnel in the land, except submariners operating Britain's nuclear deterrent – namely protecting that deterrent on the Clyde, berthed in base or at the nearby armaments depot at Coulport.

In addition, the marines are the nation's experts in board and search operations on the high seas – providing detachments for frigates and destroyers to take down drug smugglers in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean.

Although some 43 Cdo men stay with the unit for the bulk of their careers, others move around the Corps.

To remind all of core Royal Marines skills in the field, every year for two weeks the FPG troops revert to their traditional role: elite seaborne light infantry, sharpening their commando skills.

This year, 43's leaders laid on Exercise Revenant Shadow for O Squadron, the men who safeguard the deterrent, splitting the fortnight-long workout between the terrain around Faslane and the military exercise areas 90 miles away at Kirkcudbright, throwing in an amphibious landing and live firing phase for added *frisson*.

"Revenant Shadow is an important part of the O Squadron yearly training programme and aims to revise and strengthen core skills that are used by Royal Marines in all types of deployment – including the troops deployed on nuclear security duties in Faslane and Coulport," explained Capt Josh Roughton RM, Second in Command of O Squadron, and exercise organiser.

"It also ensures that the Royal Marines from O Squadron remain proficient in the skills they will require as they move to other units in 3 Commando Brigade in the future."

Pictures: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald and LPhot Will Haigh



I'll hide out with the grown ups...

TODAY'S starter for ten: Spot the odd one out...

A penguin chick is surrounded by adult king and Gentoo penguins in South Georgia's Gold Harbour as survey ship HMS Enterprise carried out scientific research in one of the most southerly points in what was once the British Empire.

More than 7,000 miles from her home in Plymouth, the survey ship is enjoying the final weeks of the Austral summer to support British scientists and use her hi-tech array of sensors to update naval charts produced long before the computer and sonar age.

Even though it's the equivalent of August on the other side of the globe, daily temperatures in South Georgia are still below 10°C – well below the 30-plus Celsius Enterprises have grown accustomed to.

The ship spent more than a year in the central Mediterranean as part of the international naval force dealing with migrants.

She handed over to her sister HMS Echo last autumn, then headed to the Falkland Islands to relieve regular patrol ship HMS Clyde which was undergoing her six-yearly refit in South Africa.

The rare visit to the Falklands has allowed Enterprise to update charts and survey the wrecks of RN ships in time for 35th anniversary commemorations of the 1982 conflict later this year.

And it's also allowed her to strike out for South Georgia, with the senior officer in the Falklands, Cdre Darren Bone, aboard as well as British Antarctic Survey experts, troops from the Roulement Infantry Company and the island's Rapier air defence battery.

They faced a choppy three-day journey across 800 miles of open sea with visibility fluctuating between ten miles and just 300ft, making it tricky for the scientists to record any whales or dolphins as planned.

Enterprise finally reached Gold Harbour – about 30 miles along South Georgia's



● Main image, penguins at Gold Harbour; top left, Enterprise at anchor in King Edward Cove; left, a wildlife sighting; above, Lt Cdr Matthew Warren and Lt Adam Doggart pay their respects at Shackleton's grave; below left, Enterprise in Gold Harbour; below right, members of the ship's company take selfies with the wildlife

Pictures: AB Belinda Alker, PO Paul Scarratt and Lt Cdr Matthew Warren

at the stunning Nordenkjöld glacier – two miles wide, four long and over 400ft high – in Cumberland Bay, where you'll also find Grytviken, an abandoned whaling station, derelict vessels, a museum and the grave of explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton.

The sailors spent two days in the capital, using their survey launch Spitfire to chart the shallowest waters, getting close to the wildlife – fur and elephant seals, albatross and yet more penguins – and enduring every possible weather event: snow, 50kt winds, rain, glorious sunshine.

The visit to the island chain concluded with a sail through the Bay of Isles on the north coast. Fog and mist prevented Enterprise launching her sea boat to land at Salisbury Plain, a flat stretch of shore which serves as a breeding ground for 25,000 pairs of penguins.

"It's fair to say that no-one aboard Enterprise will forget this incredible patrol any time soon," said Lt O'Regan. "As one of my shipmates put it: it's the thing recruiting adverts, never mind dreams, are made of."



Proving Hurworth

READERS are always asking us: what are four weeks in the life of a Hunt-class minehunter operating in UK waters at the beginning of the year like?

Well, thanks to the crew of HMS Hurworth, who've been keeping a diary, we can scratch that particular itch.

WEEK 1

Having returned from the Gulf to take charge of the ship at the end of last year, Crew 5 found Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla, Cdr Peter Sparkes, waiting on Hurworth's forecastle to hand over the James Acton Trophy – presented to the most effective minehunter/ship's company in memory of the eponymous mine warfare officer killed by an earthquake in Turkey in 1999.

The 45 sailors on Hurworth are at 24 hours' notice to respond to threats from mine/improvised explosive devices around the UK.

Even if they're dummy.

A moored Type 10 drill mine just outside Portland Harbour was posing a danger to navigation – and probably risked a few brown trousers had it hit the surface, for it was a stereotypical mine (round with spikes), albeit inert.

Though a training mine, recovering it proved to be one of the trickiest handling and seamanship tests for Crew 5 as they endeavoured to haul the device aboard in heavy seas, high winds and darkness. The net result: there's a new trophy on the sweep deck...



Clearing decks and clearing docks...

CPO(AWW) Gary Fletcher salutes Capt Tim Neild, watched by EWO WO1 David Dodd and the Commander, Cdr Stuart Yates, as a new chapter in the life of HMS Albion begins.

With the arrival of the first commanding officer in six years, the pace of life on the assault ship is quickening as she moves ever closer to returning to sea for the first time since being mothballed in the wake of the 2010 Defence Review.

Capt Neild, who's commanded vessels from P2000s through minehunters up to frigate HMS Argyll, cleared lower decks and gathered the men and women of his new flock in the assault ship's cavernous vehicle deck.

"It's an enormous privilege to be captain of HMS Albion and lead a team of such highly professional sailors and Royal Marines," he told the assembled ship's company.

He took the reins of Albion between two key dates in the amphibious assault ship's life – her 16th birthday, marked by a cake, cut by the ship's youngest and oldest sailors: 18-year-old ET(WE) Kyle MacDonald and 53-year-old PO(Sea) Dene Hitchen respectively; and moving the once-sleeping lion from an inner basin to the tidal berth in Plymouth Naval Base's 'amphibious quarter' at Weston Lake (formerly 'frigate alley'), now the home of 1 Assault Group RM and RM Tamar).

It took six tugs to move the 18,500-tonne warship through a dock gate – with just a couple of metres to spare either side, and only an hour's tide in their favour – and up the Hamoaze to her new home.

Transferring to Weston Lake allows the ship's company to use her radars and communication systems unhindered and her shafts can be turned to begin testing propulsion systems more thoroughly.

It's taken two years of work by Babcock, the ship's company, and reservists to reach this stage in Albion's regeneration, with sea trials and training lined up for later this year.

The assault ship will officially rejoin the front-line Fleet next year.

Picture: LPhot Ken Gaunt, FRPU West

THE lights from buildings at Canary Wharf put HMS St Albans in the spotlight as she spent four days in London.

The Type 23 frigate berthed at West India Docks and took part in a number of events to mark International Women's Day, the launch of commemorations for the centenary of the Women's Royal Navy Service and National Apprenticeship Week.

"It is a real privilege

to be able to bring my ship in to London, not least because we have so much to celebrate," said Cdr Chris Ansell, Saint's CO.

Local schoolchildren were among those welcomed aboard the fleet ready escort to learn about opportunities in the Senior Service.

ET(ME) Dean Gill said: "As an apprentice engineering technician I'm learning everything I need to know to keep the ship going. I've been trained

in how diesel engines, generators, air compressors and salt water pumps work – all the things we need to keep the ship going day-to-day."

Also aboard were two officer cadets from Bristol University Royal Naval Unit.

OCs Charlotte Grey and Ignacio Parelada joined the ship in Portsmouth for the journey to London to give them the chance to experience life in a warship.

Picture: PO(Phot) Carl Osmond, FRPU East





Lynne is rewarded for service

LYNNE Joyce wanted to join the Royal Navy since she was a child – and those instincts proved spot on.

For Lynne has now notched up 37 years' service, and is still playing a crucial role – as well as gaining recognition with an MBE.

WO1 Joyce joined the WRNS straight from school aged 17 – she had always wanted to serve in the WRNS, though she cannot remember why as her family has no Naval connection.

She joined the Supply branch as a stores accountant, and has never looked back.

Lynne trained at HMS Dauntless, Pembroke (Chatham) and Collingwood, going on to serve at several shore establishments, including Culdrose, Raleigh, Faslane, Drake and Portsmouth.

She just missed out on a draft to Hong Kong, but spells in Italy helped ease the disappointment.

"I really enjoyed that – and I got my Italian GCSE out of it as well," said Lynne.

She also appreciated the opportunities for adventurous training that the Navy provided.

"Not long after I joined HMS Collingwood I went skiing in Scotland, and I thought this is going to be all right," she said.

"Later, when I went to Culdrose, I went on ten days' Adventurous Training to Algonquin Provincial Park in Canada.

"We went across lakes in open canoes, carrying the canoes between the lakes – it is one of those things you do not get to do very often."

Lynne is proud to have taken part in two November Remembrance ceremonies in Whitehall.

"Because I was tall, the first time I was at the back as a junior rating, and I said to myself one day I want to be the senior rating at the front."

"About ten years later, I managed it."

Lynne currently works in a tri-Service facility at Bicester, and it is this work that saw her awarded an MBE.

As logistics information systems are upgraded and replaced, experienced people are needed to help bed in new systems and processes, and to train or mentor operators.

Lynne was presented with her MBE at Buckingham Palace last November, when her mum Betty Morgan took her place alongside guests including Judi Dench – the actor was there supporting another medal recipient.

Lynne's boss, Lt Cdr Sam Imrie, said: "WO Joyce has given the Royal Navy 37 years worth of support through stores departments."

"But for the past 12 to 15 years in practice she has been heavily involved in logistics information systems and bringing them into service."

"WO Joyce is instrumental in making sure that as systems are brought in there is no loss of capability as people get used to it. She has helped to hold it all together."

Lynne added: "As young Wrens in 1979 we were told we were there to support the ships and units on the front line."

"That mantra has been maintained all through my Naval career, and although the badges are no longer blue, it is the WRNS ethos that has helped me do my job to the best of my ability."



● Virtual crew members at the ship control console of an electronically-generated submarine

Work and play shape training

AS I settle into my seat at the ship control console of an unnamed submarine I glance over my shoulder, *writes Mike Gray*.

Crew members are seated at their positions studying screens, but there is little time to take in the details as we prepare to dive.

I have charge of the ballast tanks, so I reach out clumsily to press a button, using one of my big, bright neon-pink disembodied hands.

Having succeeded in flooding the tanks, I turn to the planesman on my left, whose glowing bulbous floating head and detached hands are also pink – strange, I thought, as a few minutes ago they had been sunburst yellow.

As he grasps the lever and slowly takes the boat down, I almost lean on the ship control console in front of me, but that would have been a big mistake.

Because the console doesn't exist, nor do the crew members behind me, nor the submarine in which we are sitting.

Leaning on the 'console' would have just seen me topple from my office chair onto the empty floor around me – a reminder of just how immersive virtual reality (VR) can be.

For this boat exists only in a VR scenario, created at the behest of QinetiQ, to demonstrate the training possibilities available through imaginative use of powerful information technology.

The genesis of the 'future training showcase' at QinetiQ's Farnborough site can be traced back to a need to scope the training requirement for the Navy's new Dreadnought-class submarines.

Ideas were bounced around between the Navy, Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), Defence Science and Technology Laboratories (DSTL) and QinetiQ, formerly part of the government's DERA technology agency.

QinetiQ, now a privatised company, subsequently put



● A Royal Navy officer tries the virtual reality training system out for himself – the controllers appear as brightly-coloured disembodied hands in the VR scenario he sees (top right of picture)

resources into the project, which could be applied to a wide range of training needs.

This demonstration, however, was based on the Submarine Service – a number of RN personnel were among those invited to attend the event – and featured three distinct elements.

Under the title xCITE (xCollective Innovative Training Environment) QinetiQ and their specialist contractors demonstrated how layers of 'synthetic training' can be combined to create an effective, flexible and engaging programme.

The first element was adaptive learning, which is driven by the needs of the learner rather than a group timetable.

Computer-based training is broken down into modules supported by video and graphics. A student who requires more support for parts of the course would automatically follow a bespoke route through the relevant modules depending on their progress – or is potentially accelerated through the course.

Instructors have real-time access to students' progress in the

form of charts and graphs, and can intervene to lend support.

When combined with student feedback, the wealth of such data also indicates where a course could be improved or amended – a relatively simple process that also allows real-world experience to be assimilated.

Among the benefits of such an approach is the fact that courses would no longer need to be delivered to groups – students can learn 24/7, suitable for their own situation, and the exact length of the course would vary according to the individual.

The second element of the demonstration was gamification – motivating students through fun and friendly competition based on game mechanics.

Created around a set of submarine missions, the demonstration display (*below left*) featured tasks which, if completed correctly, resulted in rewards, progress towards a goal – and a bit of fun.

Individual and team-working can be encompassed, and again an instructor has complete oversight of students' progress.

The final element introduced VR, and like the other two initiatives can be staged remotely – participants could be dotted across the world, so long as they can link up electronically with their fellow trainees.

The scenario of the submarine control console allows trainees to learn or practise skills in a surprisingly realistic environment, with the instructor appearing in the scenario as an additional head and pair of hands to point or guide – all participants are also linked by voice as well as visually.

Such training is not a substitute for a dedicated simulator or the

real thing, but is a cost-effective starting point which can save money by providing the basics.

Thus a scenario could be run through on relatively low-cost equipment in almost any location before trainees move on to more advanced instruction on a simulator, submarine, ship or aircraft – ideal for those away on deployment, for example.

Today's Naval recruits should generally be comfortable with the use of such technology, which is deployed in fields as diverse as medicine, mining and construction – but its appeal appears to be universal.

Speaking in the VR section, senior rate Paddy, a coxswain in Trafalgar-class boats and a submariner for 30 years, said: "I do this for real, so they asked me to come along and play with it to see what I thought."

"Using VR is brilliant – it's intuitive and really immersive."

"I think the biggest selling point was when we reached the stage where we started to behave like we would at sea – concentrating on the task but having a laugh with colleagues as well."

"It is not real and we know it – but it is real enough to get totally immersed in it."

"This kind of facility would have been useful when I trained."

"It's not a replacement – you would still have to train on the real thing – but the flexibility this sort of training gives is amazing."

"You could take a couple of headsets and a computer and rehearse basic drills, for example, bringing people on much faster rather than having to wait for time in a simulator or on a submarine."

"And it's fun – and that must be a big selling point for younger generations."

Visiting the ship of the future

THE Type 26 mobile visualisation suite has been demonstrated to stakeholders at Navy Command HQ at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth.

Type 26 Senior Responsible Owner Rear Admiral Chris Gardner opened the event, then Type 26 Requirements Manager Lt Cdr Pete Brotton outlined the progress being made and how the class will form the mainstay of the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Frigate Fleet until around 2060.

BAE Systems' visualisation technology is being used in fixed suites at Filton, Scotstoun and Portsmouth, and also via mobile versions.

Visualisation suites are used to enable engineers to walk around a computer-generated virtual reality depiction of the ship as they work on the detailed design for the platform.

They can also be used to demonstrate the design to key stakeholders, such as sailors from the front line so that they can influence the way the ship will operate and be supported.

While previous ships may have evolved during the build process, utilising visualisation technology allows a greater level of engineering maturity to be reached before steel is cut.

This provides many benefits, such as improved safety for employees manufacturing the ships, quality of build and cost reductions.

The Type 26 is already well matured and far in excess of earlier classes at this stage of the procurement process, with many valuable lessons being learned from the Type 45 and Queen Elizabeth classes.

After the Whale Island presentations, the suite – which allowed participants to undertake a walk-through of a virtual reality version of the ship – went on the road, visiting a school in Gosport, HMS Sultan and a young engineers' event, coinciding with National Science Week.

Type 26 will be a class of eight advanced ASW warships which will ensure the critical protection of the Continuous at Sea Deterrent and the Carrier Strike Group.

Capable of operating independently or as part of a task group, Type 26 will be a UK shipbuilding programme into the 2030s.

The Type 26 will replace the UK's eight Type 23 ASW frigates.

Steel will be cut on the first of class Type 26 this summer, subject to the conclusion of current contract negotiations.

The ship will also be built with role flexibility in mind; although the primary role will be building on the Type 23's anti-submarine warfare pedigree, their flexible mission bay will allow the Type 26s to undertake a full range of tasks, from warfighting and anti-piracy to humanitarian missions.

Historical cemetery

HASLAR Royal Naval Cemetery in Gosport, opened in 1859, covers around 17 acres.

The cemetery contains 772 WW1 graves, and 611 WW2 graves; in total the remains of more than 4,000 men, women and children lie here – the youngest was four months old.

A small plot holds the remains of 28 sailors of the Ottoman-Turkish State who died in 1850-51 of cholera in Haslar.

Hampshire County Council has designated the cemetery an SSI because of the botanical diversity found on the site.

The cemetery is open to the public daily; guided tours of the cemetery are a regular part of Gosport's Heritage Open Days in September.



Learning for Tyne team in the Forth dimension

HMS Example swapped one of England's great rivers (the Tyne) for one of Scotland's (the Forth) to give the North East's reservists a spot of sea time, practise seafaring and see Britain's biggest warship.

The small patrol boat is typically used to immerse students from Northumbria's universities in the world of the Senior Service, taking them to sea at weekends and the Easter and summer breaks.

But when an opportunity arose for reservists from HMS Calliope in Gateshead, where Example is berthed, to join the vessel on a journey up the east coast to Leith, then head up the Forth with her sister ship HMS Archer, it was seized.

The 125-mile journey to Leith (via Eyemouth), allowed all on board to try their hand at practical seamanship and chartwork, maintaining a duty watch and carrying out ceremonial duties.

Once in the Firth of Forth, Example was met by Edinburgh's P2000, HMS Archer, which led its guest on a tour of the estuary: beneath the three great river crossings (rail, road, nearly-finished road bridge) and past the Navy's largest ever warship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, currently in the closing stages of fitting out at Rosyth.

The reservists were drawn from a range of specialisations – logistics, amphibious warfare, maritime trade and seamanship – and were led by Lt Paul Ladislaus.

"HMS Example's crew did a great job at getting us settled down and familiar with the routines on board," he said.

"They were extremely accommodating and as a result the team found it to be an extremely rewarding training opportunity.

"It was rewarding to see how, at the end of the weekend, the team grew in confidence and capability and couldn't wait to participate in future joint training."

Example's Commanding Officer Lt Thomas Stapley-Bunten said his guests "clearly made the most" of their time aboard his small craft:

"Example is a very versatile and capable training vessel and we look forward to working with and supporting more reserves in the future."

Top apprentices rewarded

THE Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key presented awards to 14 finalists at the second Annual Naval Service Apprenticeship Awards.

The awards aim to recognise the exceptional achievements of Naval personnel who have successfully completed their apprenticeships, and supported and encouraged others to do the same.

All Royal Navy ratings and Royal Marines (other ranks) complete an Intermediate Apprenticeship as part of their initial training.

The Naval Service delivers around 2,500 apprenticeships every year and, together with the RAF and Army, is the largest employer of apprentices in the UK.

Winners were:

- Best Apprentice (Engineering) – winner, ET(ME) Kerrigan (HMS Ocean); highly commended, ET(ME) Leagas & ET(WE) Rawlings.
- Best Apprentice (Logistics) – winner, Chef Hollett (HMS Westminster).
- Best Apprentice (Public



and Newcastle



● One of the British Transamericas Expedition riders ploughs through a bog in training for crossing the swamps of the Darien Gap

Surg Lt Alex Bamford, serving with 40 Commando near Taunton, LMA Lee Macpherson from Royal Marines Poole, and Cpl Tom Pressey from 45 Commando in Arbroath intend to ride from the southernmost city in South America to the other end of the highway in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.

Meanwhile, half a world away four senior ratings from HMS Ocean face a seven-day 730-mile trek around the UK to get from Plymouth to Newcastle without any transport or money to hand.

We'll start with the British-Transamericas Expedition 2017, recreating on bike what the Army and Navy achieved with Land Rovers back in 1971/72.

That epic journey along the 20,000-mile Pan-American Highway – the world's longest road – required a team of more than 100 men and women and took three months.

Forty-five years on, no one else has repeated the feat, no one has attempted the journey by motorbike, and the 2017 expedition comprises just six men, with three soldiers completing the sextet.

The route takes them from Ushuaia in Argentina, through Buenos Aires, across the Andes, up the Pacific coast of South America, through the Atacama Desert to the city of Turbo in Colombia – where the highway ends in almost impassable rainforest and jungle.

It only re-starts 60 miles away, across the infamous Darien Gap, in Yaviza in southeast Panama. From there it runs through Central America, Mexico City, into Texas, past Denver, on into Canada via Calgary and Edmonton, over the Rockies ending in the oil town of Prudhoe Bay, Alaska (pop. 2,174), where summer lasts a matter of days.

On the way, the bikers will face venomous snakes and spiders in the jungle of Panama and wild bears in Alaska.

The team has been training for 12 months for the challenge, practising engineering and jungle-survival skills with each rider a specialist in a particular field.

"We're passing through every possible climate and terrain and there's definitely an element of apprehension, but I don't think we could feel any more prepared after the amount of training we've done," said expedition doctor Alex.

"The biggest threat is other road users, which is why we've spent so much time training to ride defensively as a group.

"There are plenty of things to worry about, but perhaps the biggest concern is traveller's diarrhoea. Riding in the sweltering heat of Central America while your stomach is doing back-flips is bad... but when you're in heavy traffic and wearing a riding suit which takes about ten minutes to take off, you're going to get a little agitated."

It's not all bad though. "Weirdly, I'm really looking forward to riding through the Atacama Desert in Chile," Alex adds.

"It's going to take us about five days to pass through and it's the driest place on earth – but with the most stunning open landscapes which look like the surface of another planet."

As *Navy News* went to press, the riders had reached Perito Moreno Glacier in Argentina after four days in the saddle, covering about 400 miles.

You can follow their progress at www.facebook.com/TransamericasExpedition.

Ocean's 'By Any Means' team have until May 12 to plan their epic adventure, equipped with just the clothes on their backs, Royal Navy ID cards and a

mobile phone.

A week later they are expected to arrive at Scott House in the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle upon Tyne. Via Land's End. And Bristol. And London. And Birmingham. Derby. Sheffield. Manchester. And finally Sunderland.

On their way to Newcastle by any (legal) means, the quartet must report in regularly to their shipmates, who'll set them various challenges along the way – all to raise thousands of pounds for ill children.

After their seven days on the road (or railways) POs Chris Orkney, Kieran Woodward, Jamie Marples and Steve Groves are expected to reach their destination with at least £3,000 to hand over to the Children's

or bust...



● The four members of Ocean's 'By Any Means' try to plan their zig-zag route around England

Heart Unit Fund (CHUF) and the Sick Children's Trust (they'd already received nearly £800 while their ship was still patrolling the Gulf).

The less-than-direct route means they'll be travelling more than 730 miles instead of the usual 400.

The week-long challenge was prompted by doing something to help two good causes which supported Chris' family last summer.

"In September my son Declan had to have open-heart surgery – at the age of just two," said Chris. "The CHUF charity and the staff at Scott House were simply outstanding and helped me, my wife Nicola and Declan during a very difficult time."

You can support the By Any Means team at m.virginmoneygiving.com/mt/uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/show-FundraiserProfilePage.action?userUrl=HMSbyanymeans&isTeam=true&un_it_redirect



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Sam books change of career with RN

FOUR years ago he was working in a bookshop. Now he's aboard HMS Monmouth on deployment to the Indian Ocean.

LETME(ML) Sam Waller – the ML refers to his specialisation as a mechanical engineer – is one of the first marine engineers to pass out as a Leading Hand on a new fast-track course.

He and 11 fellow students completed their training at HMS Sultan to mark milestone in the world of Royal Navy engineering. All are able to work as deputy section heads aboard warships.

The new LETs, who also completed their Leading Rates Leadership Course at HMS Collingwood, all undertook core technical elements of the 18-month fast-track course before separating for specific training – power and propulsion, controls and distribution, or ship's services.

Sam, who joined the Royal Navy in 2013, said: "I wanted to do something a bit more hands on than just handle books and it's something a bit different.

"My career has progressed really quickly on the new fast-track scheme. The additional money we're paid is also a really good incentive. I'm joining HMS Monmouth for nine months as a diesel maintainer."

Former motorcycle mechanic LETME(ML) Aaron Burns, who joined the RN in 2012, said: "The apprenticeship scheme has been really good. There was quite a lot of practical training towards the back end of the course and there's a lot of information to take in which has been hard sometimes, but it's been really enjoyable."

"I join HMS Montrose next and hopefully I can take lots from the experience and will be back at HMS Sultan shortly to complete my Petty Officers' course in a couple of years."

The new course follows the success of the Engineering Technician Initial Career Course at Sultan. Both courses are part of the Royal Navy's Project Faraday engineering programme.

Speaking as inspecting officer at the ceremony, Cdr Richard Clarke of the Faraday team said: "Faraday challenged Sultan to undertake a complete refresh in career training. Introduction



● Sam Waller swapped working in a bookshop for life as an RN engineer

Pictures: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper

of new equipment and skills has been matched by a greater emphasis on the importance of coaching and mentoring within training.

"The new career courses also build more hands-on and craft training back into the pipeline and has incorporated a much more activity-based approach – getting our ETs and LETs on their feet with tools and test equipment in hand.

"These changes will provide them with a deeper understanding of equipment and procedures which will enable LETs in particular to be employed in a very different way.

"They have been taught to operate, maintain, diagnose and repair our equipment and systems to a higher standard than ever before – this will equip them to share a greater level of responsibility and tasks alongside their POs at sea."



● The first LET fast-trackers have passed out from HMS Sultan

Teenagers up for disaster-relief challenge

DESIGNING a remote-controlled vehicle capable of operating on land and in the water to help in disaster-relief operations.

Sounds easy?

Well it did tax youngsters from across England who took part in the Royal Navy University Training College Young Engineers' Challenge, Operation Amphibious Angel, at HMS Sultan.

Seventy teams took part in the challenge, which was staged in British Science Week, in a hangar at the Gosport base.

As well as schools, students from the Royal Navy and RAF competed across three categories, with the overall winners receiving their awards from Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral John Clink.

HMS Saviour 2.0 from Leigh UTC at Dartford in Essex were overall winners in the 16-18 category.

Justin Chapman, 17, said: "We actually entered the competition last year with a design that focussed on having two hulls and this year we decided to evolve our design and include dual thrust which we think helped it with manoeuvres."

Colleague Sukhdeep Bhambra, 17, said: "We had two runs with the vehicle throughout the day and made a few changes in the second to try it without the claw, which didn't work quite as well, but the vehicle



● PO Howes with Luke Warren, Zach Harnston, Frank Pascoe, Alex Lawson and Bertie Mountford from South Devon UTC



● Lt Matthews watches Oliver Pollard, Thomas West and Luke Jordan from Scarborough UTC

Pictures: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper

still had lots of power. It feels really good to accomplish something."

The Lateral Thinking team from RAF Cosford won the Industry Apprentices award.

Assistant Chief of Staff Training, Cdre Andy Cree, said: "The event is about inspiring the engineers and scientists of tomorrow and encouraging innovation."

"It enables the Royal Navy to highlight the variety of exciting roles and opportunities available to engineers, not just within the Royal Navy, but across the whole engineering



● Lt Peter Taylor works with pupils at Elson Junior School

Children apply engine science

PUPILS at a Gosport school got hands on with warship engines during National Science Week.

A team from the Royal Navy's Information Warfare Division took a model of a gas turbine engine to Elson Junior School to help with the school's theme of transport.

Children from Year 6 were asked to help make the model engine more efficient – and they managed to achieve a more than 60 per cent increase in engine efficiency.

"I wanted to show students how exciting STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths – is and hopefully persuade some that studying STEM subjects will lead them to successful and rewarding careers," said Lt Peter Taylor.

Each class from Year 6 was given a scenario with the gas turbine model and split into teams for their work. Points were awarded for such things as team work, creativity, knowledge, design and the most efficient model reading at the end of the day.

No child went home empty handed though as the RN handed out Royal Navy/Royal Marines goodie bags.



● WO1 Graham Jackson talks to Year 4 pupils

The RN also arranged for BAE Systems to demonstrate their 3D visualisation suite to show pupils how new technology helps with designing warships.

Lt Cdr Katherine Abbott addressed pupils from Year 5 while WO1 Graham Jackson spoke to Year 4 pupils as they worked on parachute designs.

The school's Heroes Club – children with parents in the Armed Forces – thanked the visiting personnel with a special lunch.

Later this year the school plans to hold a non-uniform day to raise money for a charity chosen by the IW division at Navy Command HQ in Portsmouth.



● Left, pupils look at BAE's 3D visualisation suite; Below, pupils work out how to improve the efficiency of gas turbine engines

Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury



● Overall winners: HMS Dumper, UTC Reading and HMS Saviour 2.0, The Leigh UTC

A Djibouti-ful mind

RESERVIST Marc Dickson swapped his job with Transport for London to join Operation Atalanta in Djibouti. Here the Leading Logistician from HMS President talks about his first overseas deployment.

NON-STOP winter sun. African bureaucracy. Five-star hotel serving as my grot. A daily Super Mario-style commute. No fresh milk.

Being on deployment in Djibouti as part of the logistical support team for the EU's counter-piracy Operation Atalanta is not without its challenges.

The pros certainly, however, outweigh the cons – and not least because Djibouti is a safe and welcoming place for foreign military.

Of course, the fact that it is a stable country close to the strategic maritime chokepoint of Bab-el-Mandeb (through which all vessels using the Suez Canal have to pass) helps explain why France, USA, Japan, Italy and China have permanent bases here.

I arrived here in October and am part of a team of five at Support Element Atalanta (SEA) in Djibouti. There are three Royal Navy personnel – a Lt Cdr, a communications LH and me – and the whole team is headed up by a French CO and a German XO.

When I told people back home in September that I was being mobilised to Djibouti, I would almost always get one of two responses.

Almost all civilians and quite a few RNR would say "Where's that?" (answer: "Down a bit from the top right-hand corner of Africa") whilst my oppos, whose only experience of the country was the brief transit between port and airport through the capital city, would fix me with a pitying look and offer words of sympathy.

The culture shock of going from London to an African state was immense. With a fine film of dust that settled on anything left outside for longer than an hour and flies everywhere, not to mention the temperature being in the mid-30°Cs – almost 20 degrees up on what I had left behind in Blighty – this was a long way above my personal comfort level.

The country and capital city are both called Djibouti. The city came first and gave its name to the country when it gained a peaceful independence from France in 1977. Almost all of my work takes place in the city, so that's what I mean when I mention Djibouti.

Well, what could be more British than conversations about the weather? Sadly it makes for a very short conversation over here, as the weather is almost exclusively sunny and hot. I'm writing this as the country is coming out of the depths of winter. The thermometer almost dipped into the mid-20°Cs.

The mercury is heading back north now and the weather is like the two or three days Britain gets every few years when there is a particularly excellent summer. Whilst I'm finding it uncomfortable, the locals are wondering if it is safe to put their jumpers away. However, by the time I leave in April the temperature will be into the 30s and my relief will have to endure the summer heat of plus-40°C.

There has been one serious rainstorm since I got here. A feature of Djiboutian roads that I hadn't noticed until then was the lack of drains. There's actually logic to this: firstly, it makes the roads more expensive to build and secondly, when it only rains four or five times a year, the drains would get seriously clogged with the ever-present Djiboutian dust. The unfortunate thing about all this is that when it does rain, the roads hold water like swimming pools and driving becomes even more of an adventure than usual.

Part of my role is to prepare the paperwork for Operation Atalanta personnel and assets coming into and leaving Djibouti.

Djibouti kept a lot of its French systems and processes in place after independence and the Gallic habit of needing to have a piece of paper to get anything done has persisted (to be fair, 14 years in the RNR has been good



preparation for this role).

In contrast to my civvy office job with Transport for London, I don't use email too much for communicating with the local authorities.

Fortunately, Operation Atalanta has been running for eight years now, so the Djiboutian authorities normally have a fairly good idea of what I'm after when I arrive at their offices.

One of the things I learnt on my Leading Rates' Leadership Course was that 93 per cent of communication is non-verbal – when there isn't common language between the two parties, the importance of gesture becomes even more important. One illustration of this was when I phoned room service to ask for some bottled water and a hotel employee turned up carrying a kettle.

Many of the locals have a better grasp of English than I do of French (the most commonly-spoken Western language over here), so there is the scope for some chit chat in the course of my duties.

A typical conversation will run thus:

Eye contact followed by a broad smile from the Djiboutian (they are a very friendly lot, although I suspect much of this is because I am in uniform – there is an understanding in Djibouti city that members of foreign militaries are here as paying guests of the Djiboutian government and should



● Marc gets a coffee fix

be treated as such). I'll smile back and say 'Bonjour'.

The greeting will be reciprocated and more often than not, followed by 'Espanol?' The most obvious patch on my uniform is the Operation Atalanta badge which is based on the EU's blue crest and circle of stars.

The clues are there: I am European, I'm obviously not French because my uniform is not immediately recognisable (the Armed Forces of our closest European neighbours stayed on in the country since independence and are well known to the locals) and my accent/pronunciation of a single word of French has underlined the fact that I am not of Gallic extraction.

Spanish, for some reason, is always the Djiboutian's first guess as to my nationality and, after I shake my head, is invariably followed by 'Italian'?

At this point I'll turn to show the rather subtle Union Jack stitched on the upper left sleeve of my uniform shirt and point to it in mock anger. The Djiboutian will say 'Ah English! Royal Navy.'

Having established I am British, the exchange will be led by the Djiboutian and invariably cover three topics,

the level of detail of which will be determined by our fluency in English.

Number one is always Brexit.

Topic number two is, given my nationality, my love of rain. Quite right, because a rare rainy day takes a good ten degrees off the temperature and is rather refreshing. The downside of precipitation in these tropical latitudes, is that when it rains, it does so with serious intent. The drive into the SEA office on that day of rain I mentioned earlier: let's just say I would have been better off in a canoe rather than a car.

The third and final topic is who Djiboutians believe to be the most famous British person alive: The Queen? No. Theresa May? Negat. Answer: Mr Bean (pictured below right). I smile politely.

As far as accommodation goes, I very much doubt I will ever stay in such a comfortable grot again. Unfortunately, with no Service accommodation available this is where the team have to live during their deployment. Every silver lining has its cloud, and the gym can get rather busy at peak times – which means having to forgo that cardio session in favour of a relax by the pool. Hard job, but someone's got to do it.

Next up, driving. If the vehicle in front has an orange light blinking, it could mean it is about to turn or it could be that the wiring is faulty or maybe the driver simply likes the clicking sound it makes.

The concept of a safe braking distance between cars is yet to catch on: to some people that two seconds of space I would very much like to have in front of me is wasted space, as they dive into it. And yet there is no aggression, no maliciousness on show. The driving is probably best summed up as cheeky, motivated by the desire to grab any opportunity to shave another five seconds off their journey time.

Hazards do not always have an engine – pedestrians, dogs, cats, goats and camels will all wander across the road whenever the urge takes them.

From time to time I see a car sporting an *Auto Ecole* (driving school) sign on the roof. One suspects that the test at the end of it is computer-based where completing half-an-hour of Super Mario Kart is rewarded with a licence.

I was lucky enough to get some R and R midway through the deployment. The first thing I did after I cleared customs at Heathrow was to have a cappuccino in the arrivals hall.

And as soon as I arrived back home, it was off to the coffee shops. I like the odd espresso, but I really don't want it to become a habit. That's a problem over here as the short strong shot is the default setting for coffee in Djiboutian cafés.

If you want white coffee, the two choices are either UHT milk or condensed milk. You know the really small travel-sized tubes of toothpaste you can get? Well, the supermarkets over here sell tubes of that size full of condensed milk, so you can slip one out of your pocket to sweeten and add milk to your coffee to your personal preference. Can't say I'm in a rush to try it out.

Even on the American base they use UHT in the café.

Djibouti does not really have a tourist industry to speak of. That said,



● LLogs Marc Dickson served his first overseas deployment in Djibouti

the country and the city have places that deserve to be visited.

La Assal, the lowest point in Africa and saltier than the Dead Sea. The Goda Mountains and Day Forest in the north of the country, home to several unique species. Superb beaches abound on shores of the Gulf of Tadjoura, with coral reefs and shoals of tropical fish almost within paddling distance.

The whole country seems to be a real-life case of 'rubies in the dust'. There are some brilliant gems to be found.

And then there is Djibouti city itself. My first trip into the shopping and cultural centre of the town was in an evening as the temperature was dropping. The noise, the bustle, the energy of the area, framed by French colonial era buildings; the atmosphere was easily the same as London's West End on a balmy summer's evening.

My abiding impression of the city, however, is that it is a friendly and easy-going place. It is rarely quiet – the locals love to shout at each other, and there is a never-ending cacophony of car horns.

The heat, the racket and the crowding can be an intimidating mixture to start with. But over the months, I've realised that I overlooked something very significant right at the

start of my deployment. I'd like to think London is a tolerant city – but I never really had to put that to the test, because it is the city I work for and live in. It is a place where I naturally fit in, whereas, on the face of it, in Djibouti I don't. Yet I've been made to feel welcome and to feel like I fit in.

This is a country where 94 per cent of the population is Muslim and, with numerous mosques in the city, the call to prayer always makes itself heard over the urban din.

Yet there are bars in the city that prominently display Christmas decorations in December, a Catholic cathedral and the wives of the French soldiers based here can dress as they would for summer back home.

Djibouti. Really hot, interesting bureaucracy and hair-raising roads... but for all that, a fantastically rewarding place to live and work.

I wouldn't swap these last few months for the world.



Ain't no m

BI WI

Pictures: PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher and LPhot Joel Rouse

B LIZARDS.

Winds of 80mph.
Visibility zero.
Temperature -20°C.

They couldn't be further out of their comfort zone.

The United States Marine Corps is.

More than 200 men and women from USMC V12, 1st Battalion 2nd Marines, known as One-Two, were put through cold weather training by the experts Royal Marines from 40 Commando. The training culminated in international exercise Joint Viking, involving the USMC, Norwegian Army, elements of 3 Commando Brigade and the Dutch Korps Mariniers.

The Americans arrived from their base Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina. One of the largest Marine Corps bases in the US, Lejeune enjoys a subtropical climate.

That's not a phrase you could ever use to describe northern Norway, where cold weather warfare specialists from 40 Commando travelled from their base at Norton Manor in Somerset to Porsangmoen to deliver training to V12's Bravo Company.

At around 300 miles inside the Arctic Circle – and barely 100 miles from the North Cape, the tip of mainland Europe – the region offers some of the most tactically challenging and physically arduous conditions in the world.

Exercise Joint Viking saw Royal Marines from the Viking Squadron and Charlie Company of 40 Cdo in action in the Finnmark region, in an area that stretches from the large town of Alta near the coast to the village of Lakselv, which is at the southern end of Porsangerfjord. It's just 40 miles away as the crow flies... but a tortuous two-and-a-half-hour drive through the Norwegian valleys.

The exercise also extended to the village of Karasjok near the border with Finland (45 miles/one hour away) and back to Finnmark's administrative centre of Kautokeino (125 miles/two hours 40 minutes).

Of course, that's if you stick to the roads... Troops travelled up to 10 miles per day in Viking ATV(P)s (All-Terrain Vehicle (Protected)), on skidoos and skis.

The culmination of the RM winter deployment, known as Aquila 17, Joint Viking involved around 8,000 personnel working over eight days in exercises designed to practise crisis management and the defence of Norway.

Navigating in the Arctic



mountain high enough in Norway for the blizzard blizzards

environment presents particular challenges for the Viking crew; from thin ice on the vast lakes to whiteout conditions where the sky and horizon are indistinguishable.

The time-consuming procedures of measuring ice thickness to support a convoy of 14-tonne Vikings means traversing a lake can take several hours.

"The area provided some challenging navigation and off-road driving," said Capt Edward Talbot, Officer Commanding 1 Troop. "We learned a huge amount from the Norwegians, in particular making the best use of terrain and driving in deep snow."

When static in a location it is vital that shelters are built quickly to provide protection from the elements. Digging three feet into the snow provides protection from the wind but also affords camouflage and concealment.

This is key for the Fire Support Group from Charlie Coy as they set up observation posts from which they used their thermal imaging kit to target Javelin anti-tank missiles.

Sgt Matt Hoey, 40 Cdo Company Mountain Leader 1st Class, said: "The challenges of living and surviving in below-zero temperatures and unforgiving terrain are substantial, soldiering adds a further degree of complexity. You must remain focused, motivated and professional."

During some down time there was the opportunity to build the obligatory snowman 'sentry.'

Prior to Joint Viking, Royal Marines from 30 Cdo helped train members of the USMC.

"We've been given that task because we are the subject matter experts," said Sgt Simon Bramley, 30 Cdo Mountain Leader. "We've been coming here for over 40 years and we've developed a capability which allows us to operate effectively in this environment."

"By the end of the training, the United States Marines will know that if they can operate in this environment, they'll be able to operate in any environment."

The course comprised three modules delivered over three weeks, during which the USMC were taught how to move on skis and snowshoes – not particularly easy for novices apparently.

How to catch fish for dinner, avalanche safety procedures – during which personnel watched an avalanche rescue dog in action – and building shelters were also taught, along with the compulsory ice drills, learning how to survive after falling through ice.

The training helped Bravo Coy adjust to their role as part of the Marine Rotational Force Europe. The unit initially spent time in Vaernes in the south of Norway before heading north to the Norwegian Allied Training Centre at Porsangmoen Garrison.

Maj Gen Niel Nelson, commander of Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa, said: "By putting Marines in Norway and above the Arctic Circle for 30-60 days at a time, that's a whole different environment. You not only learn to survive, you are surviving. It's a harsh environment; it takes a lot of tough lessons and we reinforce that by the length of time."

At 70 degrees North, Porsangmoen is the world's northernmost military garrison, with the associated Halkvarre training area the largest in Norway, providing superb conditions for the Marines of Bravo Coy to hone their skills in this most unforgiving of environments.

Thanks to the high latitude, there were only a couple of hours of half-light when training began back in late January – and more than 13 hours of daylight by the time Joint Viking came to a conclusion.

Co-ordinated from the Norwegian Joint Headquarters in Bodø – more than 300 miles from the main action – Joint Viking also aimed to increase the ability of the Norwegian Armed Forces to build up their numbers and move great distances.

As well as Brits, Norwegians and Americans on the ground, the exercise involved Norwegian fighter jets and helicopters.

Major General Yngve Odlo, the Norwegian Armed Forces' head of operations, said the combined exercise was vital for his country's security.

"Norway is a small country, and it is vital for us that Allied Forces train and exercise under Norwegian weather conditions," the general continued.

"The Royal Marines have trained regularly in Norway in recent years, and their experience is 'if you master the Arctic, you will master anything'.

"We appreciate that they wish to come to us for training, and this is a win-win situation for both."





PROJECT FIREFLY

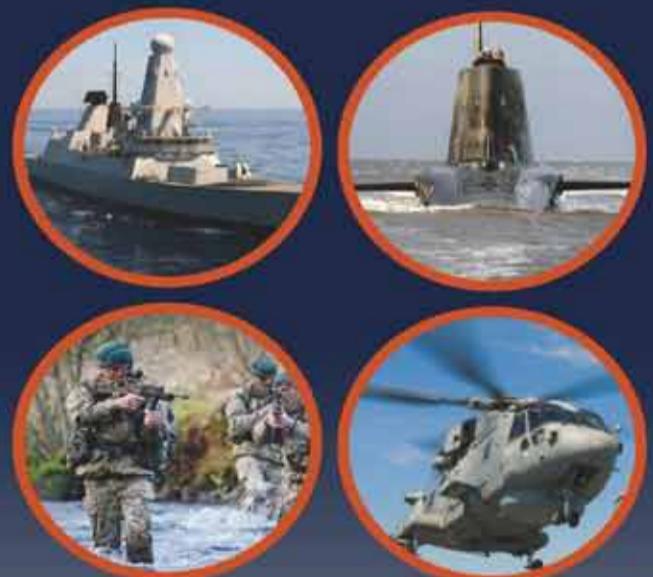
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Find out more – further information can be found in 2015DIN 01-213 or email the Firefly team on NAVYPERS-CMFFMAILBOX@MOD.UK



THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!

Cash for home at hospital

FISHER House, a 'home away from home' for military patients and their families, has received a donation from the RNRMC.

The property was built on-site at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, home to the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine, in June 2013.

Its mission is to provide free, comfortable accommodation for the families of wounded and ill troops and veterans.

It has 18 en-suite bedrooms and guests can stay for as long as they need to.

The RNRMC has gifted £20,000 to the home, providing the equivalent of 800 nights of free accommodation for families of military patients.

Since opening, Fisher House has provided more than 13,000 nights of free accommodation, saving guests an estimated £1m in travel costs.

Justine Davy, Head of Fundraising at QEHB Charity which runs Fisher House, said: "The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity has offered brilliant support of Fisher House, which means so much to both QEHB Charity and the House's occupants."

"Of the more than 2,000 military patients that have stayed with their families at Fisher House, a significant proportion have been Royal Marines.

"Generous donations like this one enable us to keep on providing that safe haven for families going through an incredibly stressful ordeal, away from the clinical environment but still within walking distance of the hospital."

Mandy Lindley, Director of Relationships and Funding, at the RNRMC said: "We recognise how vital a role families play in the recovery and rehabilitation of Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel. Fisher House at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham stands as a shining example as a welcome home away from home."

To find out more about Fisher House or to make a donation, visit www.fisherhouseuk.org or call 0121 371 4852.

Beating his fear of heights

THE Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Councillor David Fuller, pictured right, has tackled his fear of heights ahead of a charity abseiling challenge in aid of the RNRMC.

During a visit to RNRMC headquarters on Whale Island, Portsmouth, Cllr Fuller visited the establishment's tallest building in preparation for his upcoming challenge.

Speaking of his fears around the fundraising event, Cllr Fuller said: "I will hopefully be the first Lord Mayor of Portsmouth to abseil down the Emirates Spinnaker Tower on April 30. I'm petrified of heights but it's all for a good cause."

Six other mayors/chairmen from local boroughs will also be taking part in the abseil and the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire will be onsite to give his support.

The day's visit coincides with the tenth birthday of the RNRMC, which has distributed more than £50m to projects and charities such as Norton Home Headley Court, which provides free accommodation for severely injured, wounded and sick serving or ex-Service Naval personnel and their families, to the Poppy Factory, which works with ex-Service personnel with physical disabilities and mental health conditions.

Accompanied by his sister, Lady Mayoress Leza Tremorin, Cllr Fuller met with staff from the RNRMC, one of his

Weighty issues for Protector's crew

FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

THE crew of HMS Protector raised £300 for the RNRMC's Twickenham 100 event.

Eating cakes, using their brain power and using their muscle power enabled personnel aboard the ice patrol ship to take part in the event while they headed south for a five-week patrol of the Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands.

First up was a cake bake, with volunteers cooking up 100 sponges in time for 4pm tea.

The second fundraiser saw the ship's company tested on their knowledge at a quiz, which featured subjects including rugby and 'your mess mates'.

Hosted by the ship's canteen staff LPT Ravuoco and LET Morris, everyone was encouraged to wear fancy dress and pay a £1 entry fee which was donated to charity.

The final event was the 'TW100 Big Bench Challenge'. This was held in the gym where the ship's company could enter one of three categories. The challenge was 100 reps for time at either 15kg (Winner: LS Jen Brammer), 30kg (Winner: LD Mansell) or 50kg (Winner: Mne Laing).

There were winners for the best man and woman in each category which encouraged maximum participation. Personnel paid a £2 entry fee which was donated to charity.

During her patrol Protector visited the British bases at Rothera Research Station and Port Lockroy, the American Palmer Station at Anvers Island and the nearby Chilean Base at Yelcho.

Having successfully completed the latest ice period Protector visited Montevideo and will spend the northern hemisphere summer months in warmer climes whilst Antarctica is in the grips of winter.

Now half way through a two-and-a-half year deployment the ship is currently due to return to the UK in 2018 after the next Antarctic Summer.



chosen Mayoral charities for the year, to learn more about the kinds of projects his donations may help fund in future.

Cllr Fuller said: "It's been a privilege meeting staff at the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, which does so much for local people here in Portsmouth, as well as for sailors, marines, families and veterans nationwide."

Cllr Fuller is calling upon Portsmouth residents to help him raise £60k for his chosen charities, all of which are based in the city: the Oncology and Haematology Department at QA Hospital, Help 4 Special Children and the RNRMC.

Donations to the Lord Mayor's appeal can be made at <https://localgiving.org/charity/lordmayorcharityappeal/>



Pictures: LPhot Kyle Heller, HMS Protector



Bear sends wishes for birthday

INTERNATIONAL adventurer and survival expert Bear Grylls has sent birthday wishes to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity as it celebrates its tenth birthday.

As a former soldier in the British Special Forces, Bear considers the work of the charity dear to his heart. It is one of six of the main charities he supports.

Bear also holds honorary ranks in the Naval Service, both as a Lt Cdr in the RNR and a Lt Col in the RMR.

Chris Taylor, Media and PR Executive at the charity, said: "We are delighted that Bear has taken the time to wish us a happy birthday and thank him for his support for various Royal Navy and Royal Marines causes over the years.

Bear's love of adventure makes him an internationally-recognised role model for thousands of people around the world and a great ambassador for our work which supports the entire Naval Service."

The charity is encouraging members of the public to keep an eye out for more videos on social media as it celebrates its milestone anniversary.

The messages of support coincide with the charity's 'Tanner for our Tenth' campaign, which is encouraging donations of £10 by text or online payment. Visit TannerForOurTenth.org.uk for more details.

PR firm picks RNRMC as charity for year

PORTRSMOUTH-based public relations business South Coast Creative, who specialise in maritime, defence, technology and government communications and public relations, have signed a pledge to support the RNRMC as its charity of the year.

Owner and Managing Director

Natalie Reeves is a Royal Navy spouse and keen supporter of the work of the charity.

She says that the RNRMC charity was an easy choice to make because of her personal links to the Royal Navy.

Public relations services will be provided free of charge to the charity



£10

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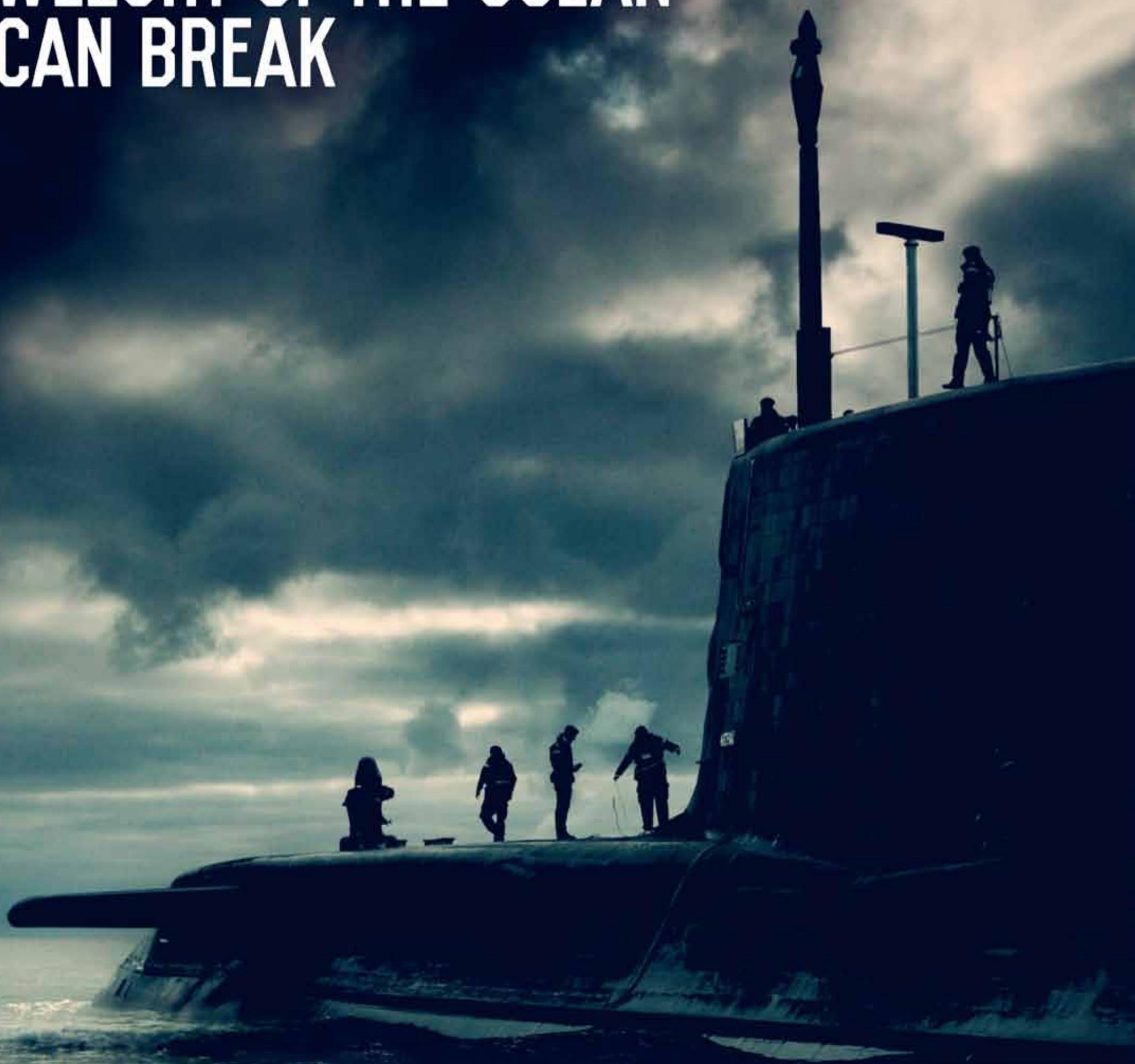
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● PO Ramsey's discharge papers are read out before the American leaves HMS Victory and considers his future during the statutory cooling-off period

American rating re-enlists aboard HMS Victory

Chris glad to rejoin US Navy

A COMMUNICATIONS technician from the United States Navy re-enlisted aboard HMS Victory in Portsmouth.

Petty Officer Cryptologic Technician (Collection) First Class Chris Ramsey, who is on an exchange programme with the Royal Navy, joined the US Navy 15 years ago.

US Service regulations mean Chris had to leave the Service and spend time considering his options before deciding to re-enlist for a further five years.

Consequently the 34-year-old, who hails from Pennsylvania, was read his discharge papers by fellow American Lieutenant James Brown onboard HMS Victory. Chris then left the ship for his statutory cooling-off period before re-enlisting – as was his intention all along.

A re-enlistment needs to be done in the presence of the US flag so the ceremony was held in the Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess aboard Nelson's flagship, which has the last ensign from the USS Constitution – the US Navy's oldest commissioned ship – on display.

Chris was re-enlisted by Commander Roger Noyce, the Commanding Officer of the Maritime Information Exploitation Group at HMS Collingwood.

The American was joined by his wife Jessica and their children Bianca, eight, and Rhys, five,



● Cdr Roger Noyce shows Chris's re-enlistment papers to Rhys Ramsey; PO Ramsey on the steps of HMS Victory

along with colleagues from Collingwood, where he teaches Royal Navy Communications Technicians, and from RAF Digby in Lincolnshire.

"My draft in the exchange programme has been unlike anything I've done before," said Chris, who currently lives in Portsmouth.

Navy Achievement medals, has served on the USS Cushing, Navy Information Operations Command Hawaii Direct Support (Submarines), Centre for Information Warfare Corry Station in Florida, and the USS Wasp.

His next draft will be to San Antonio in Texas.

Guests at his re-enlistment also enjoyed a tour of HMS Victory, along with a traditional tot of rum.

The celebrations were topped off with a cake featuring a fouled anchor and stars and stripes.

Chris, who has four US

ships, but there's lots more to look at, like learning about all the different engines and aircraft and helicopters.

"We did some fitness, like push ups and sit ups and building up strength and rowing and it was quite hard, it really tests how strong you are and your abilities to move and balance.

"There was a really loud noise when the engines started, I didn't know how loud they were until I actually heard one.

"It's been really fun looking at the helicopters, there's so much

to get in to."

Visit Liaison Officer PO Kerry Stockton said: "The children seemed to really enjoy the day; POPTI Steve Lockton was just brilliant in answering all the children's questions and organising the sports activities.

"Bringing the children in to some of our technical facilities will have given them a good understanding of some of the work we do here. Hopefully it will help them to feel proud of the roles that their parents fulfil in the Armed Forces."



● PO Ramsey is re-enlisted by Cdr Noyce aboard HMS Victory

Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury

Fun day out at Sultan



HIGH fives were the order of the day as HMS Sultan hosted a visit of excited youngsters from Bedenham and Holbrook Primary Schools for a look at Royal Navy training.

The group of 18 six to 11-year-olds from Gosport spent a morning enjoying fun and games with the base's PTIs, who taught them about the importance of healthy eating and keeping fit.

After a visit to the Warrant Officer and Senior Rates' Mess for lunch the children spent the afternoon looking at diesel engines and airframes within the Defence College of Technical Training's Defence School of Marine Engineering and the Royal Naval Air Engineering & Survival Equipment School.

Sue Edwards, Home School Link Worker at Bedenham, said: "We have a number of Forces children and we thought it would be nice for them to see what their mums and dads do, including where they eat and where they train."

"The response from the children has been really good, they were all so excited and they've absolutely loved the day."

Alex, ten, said: "I thought we would be learning about the

TWO sailors have been backed by two charities as they plan to break their own dinghy endurance world record.

The ambitious voyage, from Plymouth to Scotland, will not only raise awareness of dinghy sailing as a sport, especially within the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, but also raise awareness and funds for the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity and Bowel Cancer UK.

Last year Acting Petty Officer Phil Slade and MOD civilian Mark Belamarich sailed a Royal Navy Bosun sail training dinghy non-stop from Plymouth to Portsmouth (via Sept-Iles in France).

Their spectacular voyage of 309.25 nautical miles was recognised by Guinness World Records as the longest distance ever sailed in a double-handed dinghy.

Over the first three weeks in May Mark (a sea survival instructor with 1 Assault Squadron Royal Marines), and Phil (from the RN/RM Sail Training Centre at Royal Marines Stonehouse) will try to break their own record by sailing over 500 nautical miles of open



● Mark Belamarich and Phil Slade

sea from Plymouth to Faslane in Scotland.

Mark has a very personal reason for supporting Bowel Cancer UK not only did he survive the disease but his family is living with the consequences.

He said: "It's a privilege in supporting the two charities, bowel cancer has caused much sadness through the generations within my family."

Show's animal magic

STAMPEDING horses, motorcross freestyle and a dog display team are among the attractions at this year's HMS Sultan Summer Show.

Appearing alongside the show's traditional acts, will be Atkinson Action Horses, famed for their roles in *Poldark*, *Victoria* and *Peaky Blinders*.

Three time British Motorcross Freestyle Champion Jamie Squibb and the Squibb Freestyle Stunt Team (as seen on the BBC's *One Show*) will be performing airborne motorcycle acrobatics and ground-based stunts.

In addition, Rockwood Dogs Display team will be showing off their tricks from the big screen at the show on June 17 and 18.

Gates will be open on both days at 10am with tickets available at £20 for a family of two adults and two children, adult £8, OAP/disabled £6, child (aged 5-14) £4 and free entry for under-fives.

A limited number of discounted advanced tickets will also be available; to take advantage of this offer or for further information visit: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/sultans-show

Support for vets

A CHARITY which supports homeless Armed Forces veterans has welcomed a report published by the House of Commons.

Research into the housing-related support needs of homeless veterans looks at what makes some ex-Armed Forces personnel more susceptible to homelessness than the vast majority who make a successful transition to civilian life.

The charity behind the report, Alabaré Christian Care & Support, have been providing supported housing and successfully transforming the lives of homeless and vulnerable people for the last 25 years.

Andrew Lord, Chief Executive of Alabaré said: "Working in partnership is key to success in helping our vulnerable veterans. We are calling on MPs, statutory agencies, charities and the Armed Forces to work together to meet the needs of veterans who are slipping through the net."

Duo bid to break own record



● Jock Gardner with First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones

Thanks for 53 years of service to the RN

BRITAIN'S most senior sailor sits down with its second most senior naval historian to study the official account of HMS Fearless' role in the Falklands 35 years ago.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones joined Jock Gardner to thank him for his 53 years' dedication to the Royal Navy – first as a naval officer, then as a civil servant.

And to mark the occasion, Jock dug out Fearless' account of Operation Corporate – the official codename for the liberation of the Falklands; a young Philip Jones served aboard the assault ship as a junior officer.

Jock's 'golden thread' of naval history goes back another two decades; he joined the Royal Navy in 1964 and went to Dartmouth to train as a warfare officer at a time when the Service was expecting a new aircraft carrier (which would have been named HMS Queen Elizabeth) and the Resolution-class SSBNs.

Although the HMS Queen Elizabeth planned in the 1960s was never built, her 21st Century namesake has been – and in a pleasing turn of history is preparing for her sea trials just as Jock retires.

Jock spent 30 years in the Navy, initially serving in aircraft carriers, minesweepers and frigates, then specialising in Operational Analysis and Intelligence.

In 1989 he completed an in-service MPhil at Cambridge University on Soviet Submarine-based Strategic Forces, an achievement which stood him

in good stead for his next career move. In 1994 he joined the Naval Historical Branch, which holds the operational history of the Royal Navy and provides essential guidance to current operations.

As a civil servant and historian, Jock worked for the Branch for 23 years, providing specialist expertise on underwater warfare and also educating generations of officers on the Naval Staff and the Maritime Warfare School.

Most recently he advised the authors of the highly-acclaimed book *The Silent Deep* which won the Maritime Foundation award in 2016.

The 70-year-old leaves the Naval Historical Branch next month, but will continue to study the sea – he intends to conduct surveys of whales and dolphins, amongst other activities.

"The world, sadly, is an imperfect place. A strong and professional Royal Navy is a counter to that, and I am pleased and proud to have been a part of that effort," Jock said.

"Having the opportunity to help people now to learn from the past as I have done in the Naval Historical Branch has also been a happy and, above all, a satisfying experience."

Admiral Jones said: "I can't think of a better way of using the service learnt in 30 years in the Royal Navy than to follow it with 23 years in the Naval Historical Branch, whose work is the vital link between the lessons learnt from history and the way we do our business today."



● Dan Roiz de Sa and Duncan Slater

Duo's marathon bid

A MEDIC from the Institute of Naval Medicine is taking part in the gruelling Marathon des Sables this month.

Daniel Roiz de Sa is joining forces with former Army man Duncan Slater, a double amputee, to raise funds for Walking with the Wounded.

The pair, who first met when Dan was the medical officer on a South Pole expedition in 2013, will face temperatures of 50°C as they aim to complete the equivalent of six marathons in six days across the Sahara desert.

Known as the toughest footrace in the world, competitors in the Marathon des Sables face covering more than 250km (156 miles) carrying all their kit and food.

The race takes place from

April 7-17 and the duo want to raise funds for the charity's head start programme which supports ex-Servicemen and women with physical and psychological injuries to gain skills and qualifications for careers outside of the Armed Forces.

Dan works as the Chief Medical Officer for Environmental Medicine and Science at the Alverstoke-based institute.

Former RN Leading Medical Assistant Barry Gorman, who now works as a paramedic, is also on the team.

Anyone wishing to donate can visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/danielroizdesa> or <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/BazGorman>

Ray steers new course in retirement

A SHIP pilot who has guided the largest submarines in the Royal Navy safely into Plymouth has retired after 45 years.

Ray Preston, a Ministry of Defence Admiralty Pilot, was presented with a retirement certificate and thanked by Naval Base Commander Cdre Ian Shipperley at a ceremony in Devonport Naval Base.

He has conducted in excess of 5,000 individual acts of pilotage, standing on ship's bridges with their captains. Among his bigger jobs were piloting the huge Vanguard-class submarines and aircraft carriers into the constrained and complex waters of the Port of Plymouth with tides, winds and sometimes foreign languages compounding the difficulties.

Ray said: "I will miss the camaraderie of the pilotage service and interaction with ship's crews from many navies. And the professional pride of overcoming the challenges of bringing in large vessels with nine or ten metres draughts in tidal waters with tricky weather conditions. The largest ship I brought in was the carrier Lusty [former HMS Illustrious] and the hardest are the nuclear submarines. Now I'm looking forward to taking things easier."

He was one of the last who joined Devonport as a boy seaman aged 16 in 1971, effectively learning the ropes on a wide range of specialist former Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service (RMAS) vessels and then progressing through the grades

before achieving his Master's Certificate of Competency.

He gained his Masters' qualification in 1991 and used his professional maritime qualifications together with his love of ship-handling to focus on achieving Admiralty Pilotage qualifications, first the 'limited ships' pilot in 1995 and then the demanding 'all ships' qualification in 1997.

One of his first appointments as a mate was to RMAS Newton which served in the Arctic Circle for the first time.

Ray successfully navigated the ship through the ice fields only to find out some years later after a Lloyd's of London inspection that the ship's hull had not been designed for working in such conditions.



● Admiralty Pilot Ray Preston

It's wet, wet, wet for Officer Cadets

A TEN-kilometre navigation exercise on Dartmoor was one of the challenges faced by the latest intake of Officer Cadets as part of their introduction to leadership.

Around 130 Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College spent three days at Okehampton Battle Camp where they were taught basic field skills.

The cadets, who were in their seventh week of training, were joined by members of the Royal Naval Reserve who were completing their own two-week confirmation course at the college.

OC William Burrows, who previously worked in London, said: "There were a lot of horror stories going into this week of training, mainly surrounding the weather, but it's not been too bad and morale has remained quite high."

"One of the things we've been doing is wet and dry routines, so if you're coming back to base camp sodden, it's a case of getting out of your wet stuff and into your dry stuff as quickly as possible.

"We took a bit of a bath on Monday, which wasn't too pleasant, but if you learn how to get out of your wet clothes quickly, that unpleasantness doesn't last long."

The final day at Okehampton saw the cadets split into teams to put their newly-acquired navigation skills into practice across the moor.

Each one was given the opportunity to lead the team for a section of the exercise, briefing their fellow cadets on the aim and conditions and allocating roles.

OC Charlotte Cooper, also from London, said: "I've not done anything

like this before, but I think the training we've had so far has helped."

Returning to the Dartmouth college, the cadets spent two days completing leadership challenges, ranging from setting up and manning a refugee check-point to building a bridge across a river and rescuing a downed pilot.

Maj Simon Richardson of the Royal Navy Leadership Academy said: "This week has been about the cadets building upon the theoretical elements of their command, leadership and management training as they prepare to undertake their assessed leadership exercise, known as ABLE, later in their training. They have all had the opportunity to lead three practical leadership tasks and take part in a further 21 over the two days; therefore, they are now in a strong position and should feel confident that they are set up for success."

Picture: Nicola Dunwell



Airmen brought down to earth

YOUNG Officers at Britannia Royal Naval College took time out of their training to offer their services to local churches.

A group of ten hopeful aviators, currently enrolled on the Initial Warfare Aviation course at the college, braved cold and damp conditions to aid the local community.

The group spent their first day clearing the grounds of debris at St Clement's Church.

Midshipman James Pottage said: "Having visited the church on a previous occasion to commemorate the 100th anniversary of former Dartmouth cadet John Riley – a man

who crash landed en route to BRNC for training – we knew that the graveyard could do with some care and attention.

"As such, we offered our assistance, and shifted a lot of leaves and tree branches over the two days we were there. We also tidied up many of the tributes left with the graves. It felt incredibly humbling helping the church to respect and remember those who have passed."

The group was split in two for their next task; half went to St Saviour's Church in the centre of Dartmouth while the other half

went to St Petrox Church by Dartmouth Castle.

The first group tended the churchyard grounds while the St Petrox group righted the leaning gravestones and restored them.

Midshipman Edward Riley said: "It was hugely rewarding to be able to give a little of our spare time to provide a service to those in the community who need it."

The work was conducted the week prior to the young officers starting their grading course which indicates how they will cope with military aviation training

Sea chest is back where it belongs

A NAVAL sea chest belonging to a former Royal Navy officer has been donated by his descendants to HMS Warrior where he served as the ship's Paymaster.

Lt Cdr Caroline Saunders of the Royal Naval Reserve Air Branch – a Met forecaster at RNAS Yeovilton – decided to offer the Victorian tin chest to the ironclad after a bit of family research revealed that her great-great-grandfather had served in Warrior from September 1880 to August 1881.

"The old tin sea chest has been in the family for years," said Caroline.

"Originally it was thought to be my grandfather's but when I inherited it I had a closer look and noticed there was a brass plate with the initials 'WF Woods'. (William Fredrick) My grandfather was R (Richard) Woods, WF was his father."

"Thankfully, many years before, a cousin had done a significant chunk of research into WF Woods' Naval career as part of the background to his father's memoirs (John Woods, Richard's brother and my great-uncle)."

Caroline has a copy of his memoirs and vaguely remembered reading that 'WF' had served in HMS Warrior.

"On checking I found that yes, although only briefly, WF Woods had been the Paymaster in HMS Warrior between 1880 and 1881.

"I wondered if I might have found a home for the tin chest, a better home than sitting getting rustier in my loft. So I contacted the ship, gave them a brief outline of what I knew and would they like it."

HMS Warrior is embarking on a project to refurbish some of the crew's living quarters and her ship's company were delighted that a genuine sea chest, especially one which had actually belonged to a member of the ship's company, would make an interesting exhibit.

Caroline's research has found that WF Woods was among the first of the Paymasters to receive a commission around 1860. Prior to that they were part of the group in limbo between the lower deck and the wardroom which included doctors and other masters. (Warrant Officers)

After that he spent many years at sea, at least five years on the China Station alone.

Caroline added: "His worst experience occurred in Nova Scotia where he was in an accident which left him with a broken pelvis, which necessitated several months on an unheated waterbed through the Canadian winter.

"But he did well and ended up as Paymaster-in-Chief Fleet in charge of Chatham Dockyard, which is where he was when my grandfather was very young, but retired on half-pay in the early 1900s and moved the family to Lucerne, in Switzerland."



● Lt Cdr Caroline Saunders and her father Benjamin Woods with the sea chest in the Paymaster's cabin aboard HMS Warrior

Picture: LPhot Louise George

Pasty prize for Tank

HE'S spent 8,000 flying hours in the Sea King helicopter – and was rewarded with a Cornish pasty.

Lt Cdr Andrew 'Tank' Murray was handed the extra-large pasty by his CO at 849 NAS, Lt Cdr Chris Hughes.

Tank, who joined the RN in 1986, has flown on operations all over the world and has been on countless search-and-rescue missions with 771 NAS.

He notched up the 8,000th training flight with 849 NAS.

"I couldn't have completed all these flying hours without the support of the maintainers, who get the Sea King helicopter ready for me to jump into the flying seat and take to the skies wherever we are in the world," said Tank.



"For me to be able to complete 8,000 flying hours requires 125,000 hours of maintenance by our highly-trained engineers."

Tank, who was awarded the Air Force Cross for his bravery during a dramatic rescue in the Scottish Highlands, has been on operational front line service in Iraq, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan.

He has flown most of the Royal Navy's aircraft during his career, including Gazelles, Chipmunks and Bulldogs but it is the 'venerable Sea King' that has proved to be his most loved aircraft. In 2015 Tank marked his 8,000th flying hour with RN aircraft but had to wait until now to reach that milestone with the Sea King.

Pompey turns green

WHITE, grey and red vehicles will help sailors and civilians improve Portsmouth Naval Base's green credentials thanks to not one but two new transport/health initiatives.

Fleets of electric vans and 'Boris bikes' are being introduced base-wide to cut down on congestion, pollution and costs – and, in the case of the cycles, foster healthier lifestyles.

The NAVYfit Loan Bike Scheme mirrors the initiative made famous in London by then mayor Boris Johnson – hiring a bike at one location in the city, returning it at your destination.

Partly funded by BAE and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) as well as the RN Sports Lottery, the initiative allows sailors/civilians to pop a coin in a slot at one of the special bike shelters, clamber on to the distinctive grey and red bicycles, and stow it at a shelter near their destination, or return it to the original shed.

The base covers more than half a square mile with a regular bus service running around much of it.

But if you miss it... or you're living in Nelson and need to get to North West Wall... that's a mile's walk... providing the caissons are in.



There are 15 bikes and three 'docking stations' (bike sheds...) so far: Victory Building (Naval Base Headquarters), Lion Gate and at HMS Nelson Personnel Centre.

The plan is to expand the scheme to 30 bikes in the summer, with additional docking stations at Trafalgar Gate and close to the Princess Royal Jetty for the new carriers.

The bikes are 'step through' with enclosed chain cases, dynamo lights and hub gears and tracking devices.

As for the electric vehicles, 48 Nissan e-NV200 Combis have been acquired for the next two years, with 26 charging points and 28 designated parking bays across the site.

The white vans can cover 106 miles on a full charge – and it takes just three hours to completely recharge the batteries.

BAE reckon the electric vehicles will save the MOD around £360,000 in fuel and other costs over its two-year duration, beyond the pollution/congestion benefits.

Improving life in the Faslane

FASLANE Naval Base cemented its ties with the local community when bosses signed an agreement to work together with the council to make life better for all in the area.

Leaders of both the base and Argyll and Bute Council signed a 'memorandum of understanding' which will see the two organisations working hand-in-hand to improve the region's infrastructure and increase opportunities for RN families and local people to work, live and thrive side-by-side.

Over the next decade or so, with the transfer of the entire submarine flotilla to Scotland and the arrival of the first next-generation strategic missile boats, HMS Dreadnought, there will be more than 8,000 sailors, submariners and civilian personnel working on the base on an average day.

Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell said the massive investment in Faslane as the home of the UK's submarine force must serve as a "catalyst for growth and regeneration." in the wider community.

And Naval Base Commander Cdr Mark Gayfer said he hoped that, in time, would "better understand" what Faslane brought to the community in this part of western Scotland.

Among the projects and initiatives the RN and council have either set up or are working on are:

- collaboration with private and social housing sectors to develop options for choice in the housing market;
- a 'Service Pupil Adviser' to provide advice and support for the large numbers of military children in the Helensburgh/Loch Lomond area;
- the MOD-owned Drumfork Club on Helensburgh's Churchill Estate will be open to the entire community once a revamp is completed in the middle of next year. The new-look centre will feature an area for registered childcare provision and five

function rooms which can be used for organised and semi-organised activities by local groups/organisations;

- similarly, many other RN facilities will be made available to local community groups/organisations on a regular basis;
- the MOD and council have produced an Armed Forces and Veterans' brochure featuring information on the county and the various organisations and services available to support military families.

Those visiting and joining Faslane will find it a little easier to navigate thanks to a new info guide.

Information on the base hitherto has been scattered across various intranet sites and not especially easy to find.

The team behind the Sustainable Submarine Manning Programme decided it wasn't good enough – particularly with the entire Silent Service moving to Scotland and the rise in personnel based at Faslane.

The resulting handbook contains details on the base, units based there, whom to contact to organise visitors (including families), shops/opening hours; accommodation and dining facilities; a map; details about welfare support, the central amenities fund, the UPO, Naval stores, sickbay, RN Police and Sportsdrome.

Copies are being placed in all cabins and units, and are also being made available to the Service family community.

An electronic version of the Guide is also available on the Defence Intranet and Defence Connect.

And finally from Clyde... the Neptune Bar for junior rates is open again after an extensive refurbishment.

The facility has been fitted with new wooden flooring, new furniture and has also been completely redecorated.



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For regular and reserve members of the Naval Service



New joint staff learn about RN

HMS Bulwark's amphibious operations officer Lt Col Jim Fuller RM gives staff an overview of the assault ship's expansive ops room

Personnel from the Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ) headed to Devonport to widen their knowledge of the work of the RN and RM.

The HQ, which draws its members from all three Services, was set up following the 2015 Defence Review as a deployable, front-line staff intended to command air, land and sea forces in response to some form of global crisis.

The team spent two days at Devonport where they received briefings covering a range of topics from naval intelligence to amphibious operations, naval logistics to the new Type 26 Global Combat Ship.

They toured HMS Bulwark to learn about her considerable capabilities and travelled in Offshore Raiding Craft for a coxswain demonstration from 1 Assault Group Royal Marines.

After a briefing from the Flag Officer Sea Training team, the SJFHQ visitors split into groups to visit two vessels undergoing FOST training and assessments.

The first group travelled to destroyer HMS Duncan and watched her crew on an air defence exercise, while the second watched the crew of Norwegian frigate HNoMS Otto

Sverdrup carry out damage control.

"Our visit was enormously valuable to the team, especially those from the Army and RAF," said Capt Peter Olive RN, assistant chief of staff.

"It has really brought the Royal Navy to life for the staff and helped them to understand more about the challenges of maritime operations, as well as the enormous benefits maritime power can provide to any future deployments."

"Everyone here at Devonport and on HMS Bulwark, Duncan and HNoMS Otto Sverdrup was extremely helpful and accommodating, so thank you to them."

SJFHQ also has embedded staff officers from the UK's partner nations in the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) – the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia – and the Anglo-French Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, several of whom took part in the visit.

"As a Joint Headquarters, it's essential that we all have a good understanding of the capabilities and specialisms of each of the three branches of the Armed Forces, not just our own," said Lt Col Nick Morton RA.

"Visiting Devonport has really helped me to develop and embed my knowledge of the Royal Navy and the reality of how it operates."

Picture: LPhot Dean Nixon, FRPU West

Are you a one in three?



Defence Humanist Network

A voice for Humanists in Defence

A LOT of people these days are not religious, instead describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or preferring not to be described at all.

Many are unaware they share humanist values and this is especially true in the Royal Navy where personnel have a strong set of core ethos and values, writes Sgn Ldr Al Lindsell.

The number of people across Defence declaring themselves non-religious has increased each year and now stands at over 48,000 Regulars, Reservists and MOD Civil Servants – a trend reflected in society at large and in the RN, where almost a third of personnel now declare themselves as having no religion.

The RN is a modern and progressive organisation (for example, it features in the *Times* Top 50 employers for women) and that is something we should be proud of. Progress never stops, however, and there is still further to go in recognising the needs of non-religious personnel.

The Defence Humanist Network (DHN) is a growing group of MOD Service and civilian personnel which provides an officially-recognised voice for humanists across defence.

Like other diversity and inclusion networks, it connects

people with a similar outlook, while working across the MOD on a range of issues, but two in particular:

- i. Naval Chaplains do a great job and are often the first port of call for Service personnel and their families. Many humanists might prefer pastoral care from someone who shares their outlook and the DHN wants to explore options. The Dutch armed forces have, for example, had Humanist chaplains for more than 50 years.
- ii. Military ceremonies. Again, chaplains do all they can to make them feel inclusive, but it is hard to make a ceremony with a religious element at its heart appeal to those who do not believe in such things.

Remembrance, an especially poignant moment for all military

personnel, is a particular case in point. Last year, for the first time, the DHN conducted a humanist reflection on Remembrance in central London.

The highly-successful event included an inspirational talk from world-renowned philosopher Prof A C Grayling on 'finding meaning in Remembrance'. A number of VIPs attended the event including the Chief of Defence People, Lt Gen Richard Nugee, and Andrew Copson, Chief Executive of the British Humanist Association. The DHN intends to continue humanist Remembrance events for years to come.

Further information on the DHN can be found by searching 'Defence Humanist' on Dii, Facebook, or Twitter. Any serving member of the Armed Forces or Civil Service can join the DHN through Defence Connect and help by ensuring that their belief status is correctly logged on JPA.

First JEF(M) conference bodes well

FLEET Commander Vice-Admiral Ben Key and Commander of UK Maritime Forces Rear Admiral Alex Burton hosted the first Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime) conference.

During the conference, commanders of partner nations explored the role of JEF(M) in support of NATO, as well as looking at training and evaluation practices.

JEF is an integrated and adaptable high-readiness force which offers the government options when faced with an overseas crisis that demands a military response.

The UK, with partner nations Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway, formed JEF in September 2016, with the memorandum of understanding being signed aboard HMS Duncan.

JEF can also integrate into a larger international force, such as NATO, for a multinational response to a strategic threat.

Topics discussed included JEF(M) leadership in the Baltic Sea and increased collaboration in the North Atlantic to support NATO.

Rear Admiral Burton said: "It was a real privilege to meet the naval commanders from our JEF partner nations for the first time. I look forward to strengthening our working relationship in the future."

Where to look

RNTMs

01 - Personnel
RNTM 01-021/17 Engineering General Service - Financial Retention Incentive and Professional Qualification Payment (replaces RNTM 157/16)
RNTM 01-020/17 Senior Upper Yardmen and Senior Corp Commission Seniority
RNTM 01-016/17 Application process and fitness criteria for UK Submarine Parachute Assistance Group (SPAG) selection

05 - Management, Organisation and Business Practice

RNTM 05-006/17 HMS Torbay Decommissioning and Disposal
06 - Safety, Health, Environment, Fire
RNTM 06-002/17 Fires and Floods Reported in HM Ships, Submarines and RFAs - Analysis for 2016

07 - Training and Education

RNTM 07-016/17 Naval Warfare Conference 2017
09 - Honours, Awards, Royal and Ceremonies Events

RNTM 09-003/17 The Institution of Engineering and Technology Armed Forces Apprentice and Technician of the Year Awards 2017

10 - Sports and Social

RNTM 10-014/17 Eastern Region Golf 2017
RNTM 10-013/17 Royal Navy Open Championship Golf Marshalling Team, Royal Birkdale 2017

RNTM 10-011/17 The Golf Navy Cup Competition 2017

Galaxy Briefs

02-2017 Accelerated apprentice scheme
DINS

DIN 2017DIN01-029 59th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes (IMP) [Supersedes DIN 2016DIN01-023]
DIN 2017DIN01-037 Accommodation Booking in the Portsmouth Area [Supersedes DIN 2013DIN01-204]
DIN 2017DIN01-041 Gibraltar Naval Trust - Britannia House

DIN 2017DIN01-045 The Professional Engineering Institution Churchill Medal Award 2016/2017
DIN 2017DIN07-031 Joint Service Adventurous Training (JSAT) Parachuting - Planning Expeditions to Cyprus in 2017

DIN 2017DIN07-037 Adventurous Training Offshore Sailing - Planning Expeditions to Cyprus in 2017 [Supersedes DIN 2016DIN07-039]
DIN 2017DIN07-041 Naval Indoor Climbing Scheme

DIN 2017DIN09-003 Armed Forces Day Campaign 2017 [Supersedes DIN 2015DIN09-021]

DIN 2017DIN10-016 RN Golf Championships 2017 general competition
DIN 2017DIN10-018 Services Offshore Regatta 2017: Notice of Race
DIN 2017DIN10-021 Inter Service Paragliding Championships 2017

DIBS

07/17 New Employment Model (NEM): JPA Career Management Information

06/17 A message from the Permanent Secretary and Chief of Defence Staff on Operational Security
05/17 Combined Accommodation Assessment System (CAAS) for Service Families Accommodation (SFA) Overseas Recovery Plan Outcomes

04/17 Defence Secretary announces Iraq Historical Allegations Team to close this summer

Hauling for history

THIS is how you mark the end of LGBT history month in the Commando Helicopter Force.

A truck pull down a road at Yeovilton was just the ticket.

The challenge? Haul a six-tonne truck 360 metres (1,181ft).

The link with LGBT issues may not seem obvious, so allow CHF's Commanding Officer Col Lenny Brown - he was among those doing the hauling - to explain.

The 360 metres, he says, represents the 360 degrees on a compass... and Compass is the RN group championing LGBT issues.

The haul bit? To show that everyone in the RN is "a team, all pulling in the same direction". And a spot of free physical training to boot.

Above all, Col Brown said he hoped the sight of four teams dragging heavy vehicles would raise awareness of LGBT History Month.

"I demand that every member of my Force brings exceptional professional standards to work every-day, and the only way that I can truly expect every person to bring their best is by ensuring that those who serve as a Jungle know that they are completely valued and respected for who and what they are - zero tolerance for anything else," he explained.

"A helicopter, ship or computer doesn't know or care about your sexual orientation or gender - all that matters is that you can operate it well - this is the mind-set I expect across my Force - all that anyone should care about is whether or not you can do your job, and that you can do it to the highest possible standard."

As marines were involved, the pull did turn into a little contest, with the Combat Service Support Squadron covering the 360m distance 60 seconds faster than their three rivals.



Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum



Tartan Xrm X

YOU wait for years for a Naval-themed tartan to be designed and then two come along at once...

Last month it was submariners. This month, the men of 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group RM get their own traditional dress.

Leith firm Kinloch Anderson, which has been producing such kilts and textiles for 149 years, has created the new material to celebrate the long, proud association between the 550-strong unit based at Faslane and Scotland.

Logged with the Scottish Register of Tartans, it features the distinctive scarlet and gold stripes replicating the unit lanyard, while the dominant shades of green represent the iconic beret worn by Royal Marines and their 'Lovats' service uniform.

The tartan will be on show at 43's two major commemorations this month: the anniversary of Lake Comacchio, its famous victory in Italy in 1945, and the centenary of the Battle of Arras.

Frühling feeling in Bavaria

WITH the snows melting, the Naval Outdoor Centre Germany is shifting focus from winter to summer activities for Naval personnel to enjoy - and build character.

In the summer, the Bavarian-based facility lays on multi-activity packages: participants have the chance to try mountain biking, kayaking, rock climbing and klettersteiging.

The centre also offers week-long DT courses: Mountain Bike Foundation (MBF), Kayak Foundation (K2F), Open Boat Foundation (O2F), Rock Climbing Foundation (RSF) and Summer Mountaineering Foundation (SMF), plus Civilian Mountain Bike Instructor Qualifications (MIAS1+2) and self-led road cycle touring.

Located in the beautiful Allgäu area of Bavaria, a couple of hours' drive southwest of Munich, it's the aim of the centre to provide members of the Naval Service with the opportunity to participate in adventurous activities, exposing individuals to risk overseen by experienced instructors. The goal is to grow more robust sailors and Royal Marines, and develop confidence and team-building skills.

The personal contribution is £0. Individual units provide travel to Dover on a Saturday evening and from there NOCG arranges everything else, returning to Dover the following Saturday morning.

The training is delivered at a level according to an individual's prior experience and attendees are grouped by ability and fitness levels to ensure they are challenged whilst still having an enjoyable week.

Booking is extremely easy: Google 'Naval Outdoor Centre Germany'. The top link will take applicants to the website. Check the 'Availability Calendar' then click 'Book Online'.

Completing an application takes two minutes. Alternatively, looking for last-minute places, phone the booking office directly on 0049 8324 933 74220.

Future leaders in Plymouth

SHIPS and units in Plymouth hosted 270 students from the UK's military leadership college which attracts students from around the world.

Future senior military leaders from the UK and other countries' military who are studying at Staff College headed to the South West for the Maritime Combat Power Visit (better known by their old title, Staff College Sea Days).

The two days with the RN are the culmination of the maritime phase of their Shivenham course, where students learn about the utility of sea power in the classroom...

...And then see it in action

with a dynamic demonstration off the South West coast by warships HMS Dragon, Sutherland, Mersey and Hurworth and helicopters.

Royal Marines weighed in with 1 Assault Group taking students aboard their landing craft on the river and showing them around HMS Bulwark.

Southern Diving Group rehearsed diving and ordnance disposal routines and the crew of HMS Triumph gave some students a tour of the cramped confines of their nuclear submarine.

Other skills on show included survey/meteorological work and helicopter training.

WHAT INTELLIGENCE DOES SHE HAVE?



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Following in illustrious footsteps

TYLER Ford may have a famous relative – but he is making a mark in his own right.

Tyler (above), from Swansea, is a descendant of PO Edgar Evans, one of the party of explorers who died in Antarctica on Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated expedition.

Nine-year-old Tyler is a multiple British, European and World kickboxing champion, and is ranked the number one junior fighter in the world.

He was also the youngest fighter to be inducted into the Martial Arts Hall of Fame at the age of eight, is the winner of the world martial arts games, and known international grand champion.

Tyler was invited to HMS Excellent by the Edgar Evans Club, spending the day at the site where his great grandfather served over a century ago.

PO Evans was a member of Capt Scott's Discovery (1901-04) and Terra Nova (1910-13) polar expeditions, dying on the return journey from the South Pole in February 1912 having suffered injuries and frostbite.

Escorted by Gingie Fuller and Rob de Silva, Tyler visited the Edgar Evans Building and saw his great grandfather's skis.

Tyler, who is considering a career in the Royal Navy, claimed 64 gold medals in national and international tournaments in 2016 alone, and also has an eye on future Olympic honours.

Showcase for the Corps

SEA Cadets had the opportunity to showcase the youth charity's work in a BBC Broadcast Appeal.

The appeal, aired by BBC Radio Ulster at the end of February, featured Cadet Paddy relating how the Corps helped him to develop as a person, while Northern Ireland Development Worker Neal Somerville explained the range of opportunities on offer.

Volunteer and former cadet Heather Millar went on to describe her role with the Corps. "Being a cadet helped me with my career choices, goals and university applications," she said, adding how it was fulfilling to see "all of the kids develop".

The most kindest cut of all

SEA Cadet Jade wanted to do something for others – so she had a haircut.

It's not quite as simple as it sounds – the Farnham unit cadet turned 16 on February 17, and decided that was the day to lop off her long hair.

Four plaits were cut off (pictured right), which went to the Little Princess Trust to make wigs for children who have lost their hair through illness or

treatment for cancer.

In addition, Jade raised over £300 for the charity – family, friends, teachers, and staff from Farnham unit all made donations.

Jade had a birthday party with family and close friends, one of whom is also a member of the Sea Cadet Corps and travelled from Essex to be with her.

The cadets met whilst on a training course on board tall ship

TS Royalist, the Corps flagship.

Jade has been with Farnham since she was 12 years old and has been on many courses, gaining qualifications which she hopes will help her into adulthood.

She loves the life and making friends along the way, and is considering joining the Royal Navy when she is old enough.

For more information on the Little Princess Trust see www.littleprincesses.org.uk



Padstow seeks new CO

PADSTOW unit is looking for a new Commanding Officer.

The unit, a comparatively small one, is located waterside on the Camel Estuary in North Cornwall, and holds parades on two evenings a week.

The search for a new CO is necessary because the current officer moves on next month.

Responsibilities for this role require previous Cadet Force experience, or (while still a Sea Cadet Adult Volunteer role), current or recent Armed Forces experience.

Padstow is also in need of both uniformed SCC instructors to deliver the cadet experience, 'non-uniformed' volunteers and Unit Management Team (UMT) members, who provide the day-to-day running resources, and the charity management of the unit.

For uniformed instructors, there is a direct entry pathway for serving personnel, with a small number of mandatory training modules to be completed.

For UMT members, there is a similar, but smaller mandatory training requirement.

If you have a few spare hours a week, and are concerned at making a positive difference to the lives of young people – and particularly if you are an ex-Cadet, or have a waterborne or AT training qualification, then please consider helping out at Padstow unit.

If you are interested, or would simply like to know more, take a look at the website – www.sea-cadets.org – or contact the Unit Management Team Chair, Capt John Hinchliffe, on JHinchliffe747@aol.com or call on 01841 532052.

Second yacht

THE Sea Cadet Corps has put pen to paper on a deal for a second Rustler 42 yacht at the Rustler ship yard in Falmouth, Cornwall.

Robert Woods, Marine Society & Sea Cadets trustee, shook hands with the Director of Rustler Yachts Ltd, Adrian Jones, to complete the purchase.

Cdr Peter Fish RN (Rtd), the president of Falmouth and Penryn unit, took a group of cadets along to inspect the build of the first Rustler yacht, TS City of London.

The new yachts are bigger than the current Tradewind 35s, sleeping six cadets, meaning the charity can help more young people get out to sea to experience an offshore voyage.

Tom on the run

A MAN who lost five stone after a health scare is running the London Marathon this month to raise money for a London Sea Cadet unit.

Tom Burgess will take on the challenge on April 23 to boost the coffers of Wandsworth, Chelsea and Fulham unit and the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

In March 2016 Tom, 36, weighed 23 stone and required urgent medical attention for very high blood pressure.

He now exercises daily and also ran the Barcelona Marathon last month, finishing comfortably under five hours.

To donate to Tom, visit <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/thomasburgess1>

the building of an extempore rig in the Seamanship class, and Junior training.

The latter group received an invite to visit her 'little farm' – the Bathurst Estate...

On completion of the tour the unit mustered for Ceremonial Sunset, after which the High Sheriff expressed her delight at what she had seen and the dedication of the instructors and all those who support the unit.

Cadets were also interested to learn from her a little of the work and duties of a High Sheriff.

The evening concluded with a presentation of a bouquet by the unit's Junior Cadets, after which cadets, staff and guest adjourned for a well-earned 'Stand Easy' which gave the Countess an opportunity to chat informally to unit staff.

On leaving the unit the Countess expressed a desire to visit Tewkesbury again during



the summer, which staff said they would be happy to arrange.

The role of High Sheriff has evolved over the course of 1,000 years and more, and today is

mainly ceremonial, though in theory High Sheriffs are required to act as a support to the Crown and judiciary systems in specific situations such as royal visits.

Singing in the rain

MEMBERS of Gateshead unit were filmed at the Angel of the North for a clip that was due to feature on *Let's Sing And Dance for Comic Relief* (pictured right).

Filming for the programme – a TV talent show featuring celebrities – took place early last month at the Gateshead landmark, and was scheduled to be broadcast on BBC1 the day after Red Nose Day at the end of March, shortly after *Navy News* went to press.

Cadets donned Comic Relief red noses and headbands, and performed in the rain with Cubs and Scouts to Bill Medley's and Jennifer Warnes' (*I've Had*) The Time of My Life.



Stepping up training

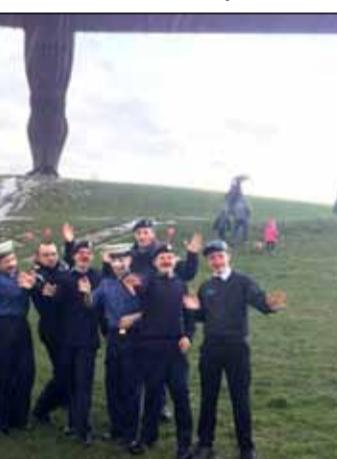
MORE than 40 cadets from the Recruit Companies of the Portsmouth Division Royal Marines and HMS Excellent Royal Naval Volunteer Cadet Corps took part in Exercise First Steps, marking the culmination of five months of training.

The group of 43 was supervised by 12 staff – a mixture of serving, ex-Service and civilian personnel.

The exercise was planned by Assistant Training Officer C/Sgt Gavin Collar RMC.

The 34 RM cadets, led by Recruit Company Commander C/Sgt Oli Seebohm RMC, spent the two days at Brownsea Camp putting into practice the skills learned during training

● RMVCC cadets march in at the end of Exercise First Steps
Picture: Oli Seebohm



including, bivvy building, field cooking, camouflage and concealment and patrolling.

The nine RN cadets, led by CPO Trevor Coleman RNC, spent the first night at HMS Excellent so they could visit HMS Bristol before joining their RMVCC counterparts the next morning to continue the exercise alongside them.

Royal Naval Volunteer Cadets were the first to join the newly re-established HMS Excellent VCC.

At the end of the exercise VCC Commander Lt Col Terry Wing RMC presented RM cadets with their RM berets and RN cadets with their new VCC epaulettes.

The VCC is open to boys and girls between the ages of nine and 17 who can join as a Royal Naval or Royal Marines Cadet.

For more information visit www.volunteercadetcorps.org



Ben rises to the challenge

EASTBOURNE Royal Marines Cadet Ben (above) is one of the youngest people to pass the Advanced Seamanship Qualification, which just seven young people have achieved so far as *Navy News* went to press.

The 13-year-old was tested on his knowledge of rope work, rigging, splicing and whipping, canvas work and decorative rope work, while practical tests included working in a team to rig equipment such as sheerlegs, gyns and derricks.

Last year, just 45 out of 14,000 cadets across the UK were awarded the qualification.

Ben, who would like to be a doctor with the Royal Marines when he is older, said: "I was really surprised to have passed."

"Everyone on the course was older, about 15 – I was the youngest there."

"I like trying different things with Royal Marines Cadets. I like PT (physical training), as I find it fun."

The Advanced Seamanship is part of a national partnership with Carnival and Sea Cadets.

Carnival Corporation & plc, the parent company of P&O Cruises and Cunard, is supporting the Sea Cadets qualification, which will enable cadets to broaden their career options in the maritime industry.

Five-star footballers

FROM the mouth of the Clyde to the Garden of England, Sea Cadet Corps players returned home clutching trophies from the Corps' National Five-a-Side competition.

Held at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre in Lincolnshire, the tournament featured the best unit and district players from across the UK.

The Wain Cup, awarded to the winners of the Junior Girls category, went to **Sheffield** unit, while **Greenwich** took the Junior Boys' equivalent, the Ganges Cup.

Leicestershire District was victorious in the Senior Girls' competition, winning the Wilmott Cup, while the Senior Boys' team from **East Kent** District took the Guiness Cup.

Trophies were also awarded to the best players in each of those classes: **Mne Cadet Taylor** from **Sheffield** unit (Junior Girls), **Cdt William** from **Salisbury** unit (Junior Boys), **LC Bethany** from **Coventry** unit (Senior Girls) and **OC Michael** from **Greenock** unit (Senior Boys).

Sailing bursaries

OFFSHORE bursary awards were given to seven cadets ahead of the Shipwrights Dinner at Fishmongers Hall, London.

Certificates and money were handed to the seven cadets from London Area when the Livery Court of Shipwrights met before the dinner.

The cadets are: MC1 James, AC Sam, MC1 Max and Cdt Cpl Ted from **Bexley** unit, Cdt Louie from **Greenwich** unit, OC Emma from **Sutton** unit and Cdt Ben from **Southwark** unit.



Gibraltar Cup glory for Lincoln squad

LINCOLN Royal Marines Cadets have been crowned the winners of the coveted Gibraltar Cup.

Young people aged between 13 and 18 from the Lincoln detachment represented the Eastern Area and X-Ray Company at the historic contest, which took place over a weekend in early March.

Lincoln were pitted against five other detachments across the UK – **Chatham** in Kent (who finished in sixth place); **Queensferry** in Flintshire, Scotland (fifth place); **Plymouth Drake** in Devon (fourth place); **Maldon & District** in Essex (third place); and **Preston** in Lancashire (who finished as runners-up) – each representing their respective areas.

And the icing on the cake for Lincoln came when Cadet Cpl Harry also won the trophy for Best Section Commander and Most Inspirational Leader.

The event took place at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM), Lympstone, Devon, where the teams took on the gruelling assault course used by Royal Marines Commandos in training.

They were assessed on skills such as camouflage and concealment, observation,

judging distance, practical leadership and patrol lanes.

Their efforts were scored by serving Royal Marines Commandos.

Sgt (SCC) Andy Park, a volunteer with Lincoln Royal Marines Cadets, said: "For the detachment to achieve everything they have done in winning the Best Section Commander award along with the overall Gibraltar Cup competition has been a fitting tribute to the hard work and effort put in by both the cadets and adult volunteers within the detachment and X-Ray Company."

"The experience they have gained will last them for a lifetime and is something of which they can be thoroughly proud."

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell said: "The Gibraltar Cup is the highlight of the Royal Marines Cadets calendar, and it was great to see all the months of hard training pay off."

"Well done to all the detachments, who should be really proud of their efforts, and congratulations to Lincoln, who won what was a closely-fought contest."

Royal Marines Cadets (RMC) is part of national youth charity Sea Cadets, and young people enjoy all the exciting waterborne

activities available to Sea Cadets, as well as branching off into advanced adventurous training.

To find a detachment near you, see www.sea-cadets.org/units

The Gibraltar Cup was

introduced in 1957, and comprises a series of challenges, tests and assessments.

It is held annually, and is considered one of the toughest challenges in the Corps.



● (Above) The winning detachment from Lincoln with the Gibraltar Cup; (right) a cadet receives a helping hand during the competition

Auxiliary welcomes SW cadets

A SPELL in maintenance for RFA Mounts Bay provided an ideal opportunity for **Falmouth** and **Penryn** Sea Cadets to further develop well-established affiliations with the ship.

Three times in February the ship welcomed groups on board, as well as those from the neighbouring **Truro** and **Padstow** group.

More than 40 Sea Cadets joined in activities in Falmouth, including interactive (wet!) firefighting drills, lifeboat familiarisation, visiting the ship's hospital, an insight into the ship's self-defence weapons and visits to the ship's machinery control room and bridge.

Later in February Mounts Bay CO Capt David Buck RFA and 3/O(X) Steve McCubbin, the ship's Sea Cadet Liaison Officer, attended the Falmouth and Penryn unit awards evening, also attended by local dignitaries and proud parents.

The event was opened by unit presid Cdre Peter Fish RN (Rtd).

Capt Buck said "The achievements of the unit have been remarkable and it has been a most uplifting experience to observe the dedication and enthusiasm of these inspirational young people."

"They are clearly a credit to the Sea Cadet Corps."

Following a ceremonial raising of colours, inspecting officer Lt Cdr Trevor Brookes, RNO Falmouth, inspected the guard of honour and presented awards to successful cadets.

Close look at Wave Ruler

DEVON University Royal Navy Unit (URNU), based in Plymouth, is the latest of the 15 URNUs to be formed.

Coming together less than six months ago and without a P2000 assigned to the unit, there have been few opportunities so far for shipboard experiences.

So an offer of a ship visit from RFA Wave Ruler, whilst on the buoy at Plymouth Sound, was readily accepted.

Ten students and two Training Officers were given a comprehensive ship's tour and capability brief of the tanker and all trainees enjoyed their first experience of an RFA ship.

Officer Cadet (OC) Will Manthorp said: "I found the visit to Wave Ruler to be very enlightening, particularly as it highlighted the significance that the RFA has in its support for UK Naval operations."

"It also helped fuel considerations of a career with the RFA for myself."

OC Hannah Osborne said: "Having the opportunity to speak with current RFA Cadets was a great way to learn more about the work of the RFA and the opportunities I have available when I graduate".

Devon URNU Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Martin Hibbert said: "The URNU is not a recruiting vehicle."

"It is intended to broaden Naval understanding and develop undergraduates who show potential to become the leaders of tomorrow, through maritime experience and exposure to the values and ethos of the Royal Navy."

Capt Rob Anders RFA, Commanding Officer of Wave Ruler, said "The opportunity to expose people with a maritime interest to the close working relationship between the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary is one we always seize upon."



• Les Wills

Veteran returns

A ROYAL Navy veteran has been reliving his wartime experiences as a sailor on board HMS Indefatigable during a special visit to Portsmouth to see base's new aircraft carrier facilities.

Les Wills, 90, first came to Portsmouth in November 1944 as a young seaman drafted to Indefatigable, which was preparing to join the Pacific Fleet.

"We met up with the other ships of the Fleet in the Indian Ocean and we were soon heading for our first action," said Les.

Indefatigable was one of six Fleet carriers that made up the biggest task force of British ships ever assembled – more than 200 warships and over 500 aircraft sailed for the Far East.

Les remained in the Navy for much of the 1950s, where he served in Portsmouth as a Boat's Coxswain in the Dockyard.

"It's unbelievable to be back. I didn't know what to expect," he said.

Looking over the New Princess Royal Jetty, which has undergone a multi-million pound upgrade to receive the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers, Les said: "It's absolutely incredible and marvellous what they've done here; I can't believe it's the same place I helped fit out HMS Indefatigable back in 1944."

Earthquake medals for Navy rescuers

TWO Royal Navy veterans who helped the people of Chile following a devastating earthquake have received medals – 78 years on.

Frank Burton, 98, and Basil Trott, 97, were serving with the South American Squadron on the eve of World War 2 when an 8.3 magnitude quake struck the Chillán and Concepción regions.

HM Ships Ajax (in which Frank was serving) and Exeter (Basil's ship) sailed to Talcahuano, the port of Concepción, where British sailors were met with a town in ruins.

The ships' companies threw themselves into the rescue effort, clearing streets of rubble, pulling down unstable buildings and ferrying survivors back to Valparaíso.

The earthquake, on January 24 1939, killed up to 30,000 people, and remains the single deadliest quake to hit the country.

The Chilean Ambassador in London, Rolando Drago Rodriguez, travelled to Cambridge to present the pair with the City of Concepción Earthquake Medal.

Mr Rodriguez said: "As a token of our upmost gratitude and their selfless duty in assisting the people of my country, I am pleased to award these medals to these two brave men."



Picture: PO(Phot) Des Wade

"It demonstrates the strong and lasting bonds of friendship between our nations."

When the earthquake struck both cruisers were on a break between patrols in Valparaíso, and Basil (right of picture, with Frank and Mr Rodriguez) recalls the moment he knew something was wrong.

"I had a pint of beer in front of me and all of a sudden it decided it didn't want to stand still," he said.

"It wobbled and jumped about all over the table, and I thought good gracious, what's happening?"

A Royal Marines Bugler went around the

streets, recalling everyone from HMS Exeter and Ajax back onboard and get ready to steam at best speed the 250 miles south to Concepción to lend assistance.

Medals were struck for the rescuers, but it is thought that the outbreak of war prevented them from being presented at the time, according to Malcolm Collis, Archivist of the HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association.

"I recently uncovered spare medals in the archives and set about establishing who had missed out – Frank and Basil."

"The Association wrote to the Chilean Embassy and to our delight, the Ambassador offered to present the medals, 78 years after the event."

"Two of our other surviving veterans had received theirs in the early 1990s and one of them, Jim London, HMS Exeter, aged 98, was also present at the ceremony."

Both Frank and Basil were thrilled to receive their long-forgotten medals and proud of the help they had given to the people of Chile so many years ago.

"We'd only been in Concepción a few weeks before, and it was all we could do to repay our friends and their warm hospitality they afforded us then," said Frank.

DEMAND for places at the National Conference gala dinner in Perth is such that the main dining room is now full and places are going fast in the 'overflow'. The message from General Secretary Capt Paul Quinn was simple: "If you do not book soon you will not eat with us..."

Three branch motions and four National Council motions have been received for

Order is placed for minibuses

AN ORDER has been placed for the three minibuses bought using £170,000 of LIBOR funding – fines levied on financial institutions for manipulating inter-bank loan rates.

The buses will be supplied by an Essex company, and it is hoped that one will be ready in time to go on show at the National Conference in Perth in June.

RNA General Secretary Capt Paul Quinn said that the Peugeot buses are being fitted with hydraulic wheelchair access systems.

One will be available for use in the northern part of the country – covering Areas 10, 11 and Scotland – another will be based in Portsmouth and the third will go to an as-yet undetermined location in the west.

"The buses will be there to be used by all veterans, not just the RNA," said Capt Quinn.

"There will be no charge for borrowing them, as insurance, maintenance and so on is covered by Central Office.

"The only cost will be fuel and cleaning them after use."

Details of how to borrow the buses will be promulgated shortly.

MP visits Uxbridge

THE local MP paid a visit to Uxbridge branch to officially hand over a medical defibrillator.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson spent an hour meeting its members and being shown around the club by branch secretary S/M Terry Briggs before handing the defibrillator to branch president S/M Donald Thorpe.

Hurry up for dinner

Conference on Saturday June 3 – more details next month – and plans for a parade, service and march-past on the Sunday are also being finalised.

Central Office staff are also looking further ahead to Conference 2018 in Dublin, and work is being done to identify accommodation in the area.

Conference itself will be held at the Royal Marine Hotel.



Picture: Paul Jacobs/pictureexclusive.com

Men of honneur

TWO D-Day veterans were honoured by the French for their actions in the D-Day landings in 1944.

Former sailor David Clark (pictured above, right), from Hertfordshire, and Army veteran Frank Sims, of Berkshire, received the Legion d'honneur at a ceremony in Portsmouth Guildhall.

David, 91, joined up in 1943 and served in numerous ships including HMS Pegasus and Southdown.

During D-Day, in HMS

Southdown, he helped to scuttle a ship on Sword Beach to form a breakwater.

David's grandson-in-law, Richard Ellis, is currently a Royal Navy diver at Horsea Island.

Frank, 97, served with the 51st (Highland) Infantry Division during the D-Day invasion.

His division was trapped in Caen for two weeks and had to be rescued by the Americans.

They then pushed on, joining the Allied advance through France, Belgium and finally into Germany itself.

Naval Quirks

IN 1942/43 THE FAMOUS 'WESTERN APPROACHES' CAMOUFLAGE SCHEME HAD TO BE MODIFIED...



BECAUSE U-BOATS WERE NOT THE ONLY CRAFT TO FAIL TO SEE OUR CAMOUFLAGED ESCORTS...



blast! The U-Boat got away. Do you think he saw us coming?



MICAN



I don't see how - our fellow corvettes in our Escort Group didn't...



Farewell to old warhorse

A GROUP of Royal Navy veterans – and the Senior Service's ranking officer – attended a ceremony in India to mark the decommissioning of the former HMS Hermes.

The carrier, which acted as British flagship during the Falklands Conflict, was sold to the Indian Navy in 1986 and renamed INS Virat.

But now, more than 70 years after she was laid down (construction of HMS Elephant, as she was originally planned, was put on ice at the end of the war, and she was finally commissioned in late 1959) she has reached the end of her active life.

A group of almost 20 members of the **HMS Hermes Association**, including a number of Falklands veterans and led by Rear Admiral Dick Melly, travelled to Mumbai for the ceremony at the invitation of the Indian Navy.

Several were interviewed on television, and all were grateful for the "wonderful" hospitality of the Indian Navy, as well as pleased to return to their old ship after more than 30 years.

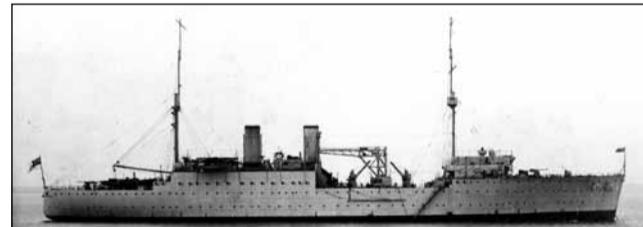
First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones was Guest of Honour at the decommissioning ceremony, paying tribute to the workers of Barrow who built her and the skill of the Indian Navy for "keeping her operational, long after the rest of her kind had been turned into razor blades."

Admiral Jones also spoke of the strong ties between the two countries and their respective navies.

Marking 70

CHICHESTER branch is organising a celebration of the 70th anniversary of their foundation in 1947, to take place on the evening of September 30 at the Assembly Room, Chichester Council House, North Street.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery aircraft in our February edition (right) was the Short Sturgeon, and the Malta-based squadron that operated it was 728 NAS.

The correct answers were provided by Buster Brown, from Kent, who wins £50.

This month's mystery ship (above) was built as an accommodation and repair ship by Vickers Armstrong between the wars.

Her World War 2 service began in Malta, but after a spell in Freetown she returned to another Mediterranean base until 1944, when she moved to support the Eastern Fleet.

She returned to the UK after VJ Day, and was scrapped in 1954.

1) What was her name, and 2) at which Mediterranean port was she predominantly based between 1941 and 1944?

Semaphore is online

PROJECT Semaphore, the RNA-led initiative to get 'digitally isolated veterans' online has made some marked progress, according to project manager Sharon Brown.

Two training events were held, in London and Harrogate, which provided a basic brief to allow a group of volunteers to take iPads out to veterans who applied to join the project.

And amongst those veterans were residents of Pembroke House, a care and nursing home owned and managed by the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, who are now embracing the opportunities and benefits of being online.

The two-year funded project, led by the RNA in a bid to address social isolation, aims to de-bunk myths around the perils of the Internet, offer the support of a 'Computer Buddy' and allow veterans to truly tap into the network of Shipmates supporting each other.

Sarah Clewes, RNBT Trustee, said: "The residents are most looking forward to being able to FaceTime relatives who live too far away to visit, take photos in the garden, explore new hobbies and catch up on the news and weather should they fall asleep and miss the end!"

Residents will extend their knowledge and improve their skills by attending weekly iPad tutorials led by the Pembroke House Activities Co-ordinator.

Another Shipmate who has received his iPad is thrilled that he and his terminally-ill wife are able to make video calls to their relatives, which has made a significant difference to them at a very difficult time.

Trained volunteers are the key to the success of Project Semaphore.

A number of training days have already been delivered by the Apple Education Team and RNA volunteers are helping fellow Shipmates get online.



● RNBT Trustee Sarah Clewes with two residents of Pembroke House in Gillingham – the picture might be slightly blurry, but was taken by another resident learning to use the iPad

iPads to the candidates and train them. The first 150 iPads are being deployed.

"If people have wifi at home they get the standard device; those without get a one-year or 12GB sim card, and after that they will have to pay for their own connectivity."

"We are very pleased with the scheme. It is all in good order."

"So if you know of a Naval veteran over the age of 65 who is not online and could make use of this, email sharon@royalnavalassoc.com to register."

"The scheme isn't designed to help those whose computer or tablet is getting a bit old – it is to get people online who are not currently online."

"One veteran was asked why he was interested in the project and he said 'if I don't get online I feel like a sailmaker on a nuclear text aloud, for example.'

"The idea is that we train volunteers, and they will take the



● A Pembroke House veteran gets to grips with his new iPad

submarine'."

Full eligibility criteria and how to volunteer can be found at the Project Semaphore tab of the RNA website www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/

Yugoslav war veteran is honoured

MEMBERS of St Helens branch visited the military section of the local cemetery to pay their respects to a Yugoslav sailor who died more than 70 years ago.

PO Aleksander Nincic died in July 1946 at the age of 22, having been wounded in 1943 while serving aboard a Yugoslav MTB in the Mediterranean.

The Durnitor had escaped from Yugoslavia to join the British Mediterranean Fleet in Alexandria after the country was invaded by Axis forces in 1941.

PO Nincic was wounded in the chest by shrapnel during a patrol along the North African coast escorting convoys carrying supplies to British forces.

He was admitted to a hospital in Egypt before being transferred to the Royal Naval Hospital in Malta, where he remained until the end of the war.

Unable to return to his home country at the end of hostilities, partly for health reasons, the senior rate was transferred to hospitals in Cardiff then St Helens.

His family never received details of his death and final resting place, which were only discovered by them when an appeal on the internet was seen by an historian in Rainhill, where PO Nincic died.

The service was conducted by a Greek Orthodox priest, and was attended by PO Nincic's great niece Ivana and her cousin Dubravka, who had travelled from Serbia to pay their respects.

The *Last Post* and *Reveille* was sounded by the St Helens' branch bugler S/M Gillon, and a wreath was laid on behalf of the branch by chairman Sub Lt Tony Bull.

WRNS celebration

HANWORTH branch celebrated 100 years since the formation of the Women's Royal Naval Service with a buffet dinner dance.

Amongst the shipmates dancing the night away were a 94-year-old former Wren, and a comparative youngster aged 84.

Branch acting welfare officer S/M George Drewett said: "A combined effort of our RNA members and associate members worked as a well-oiled team."

More than £600 was raised by a raffle on the night, which will be donated to the Wrens Association, and a further £65 will be donated to Hanworth's children's fund.



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Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Entries must be received by May 12.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our June edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 266

Name
Address
.....
My answers: (1).....
(2).....

↓ RNA Central Office,
Room 209, Semaphore
Tower (PP70), HM Naval
Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.
↓ admin@royalnavalassoc.com
↓ 023 9272 3747
↓ www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Chance to parade in Whitehall

THE newly-rebranded Naval Associations Biennial Parade takes place in Whitehall on Sunday September 10.

Guests of honour will include senior Naval officers, politicians and Mrs Gillian Molyneux and her daughter Bethany – Mrs Molyneux is the widow of Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux who was killed in April 2011 whilst serving in submarine HMS Astute in Southampton.

It is hoped that over 500 personnel, both veterans and serving will be on parade, as the event is open to all Naval associations, not just the RNA.

As well as representatives from the many UK Naval associations, there will also be strong contingents from Belgium and the Republic of Ireland.

Trainees from HMS Sultan and Collingwood will parade, as will members of the Sea Cadet Corps.

Music will be provided by the volunteer band from HMS Collingwood.

The parade will form up in Whitehall Place from around 1015, and will step off at around 1030.

RNA General Secretary Capt Paul Quinn said: "This is a marvellous opportunity to march down Whitehall at a very unique Naval occasion."

Anyone who intends to join the parade is asked to let RNA Central Office know on nigel@royalnavalassoc.com – use the same address for full details, which will also appear in the *Semaphore Circular*.

Keppel medals up for sale

TWO important sets of Naval medals are up for auction in June.

A group of 13 medals belonging to Admiral of the Fleet the Honourable Sir Henry Keppel (1809-1904) are offered for sale alongside those of his son, Admiral Sir Colin Keppel (1862-1947).

Both men were favourites of the Royal Family, with Admiral Sir Colin serving as an Extra Equerry to four kings.

The two sets feature in the sale of Orders, Medals and Decorations at specialist auctioneers Morton & Eden in London.

www.mortonandeden.com

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Chiropody on offer at Plymouth University

THE School of Podiatry has been in Plymouth since the early 1980s and has a long history of developing highly-skilled podiatrists who have then gone on to advance their careers in many different contexts and across the globe.

Podiatry (also known as chiropody) is one of the smaller allied health professions, but nonetheless has significant importance, especially with the growing number of people in the Western World developing diabetes and many living into their 80s and 90s.

If you are interested in locomotion and the function of the lower limb, then studying at Plymouth University with a team of experts in musculoskeletal, podiatry is for you.

They will provide you with in-depth knowledge of all the systems that integrate to allow us to move from one place to another.

Podiatrists are specialists in lower extremity wound care, preventing amputations and keeping individuals mobile.

Their scope of practice also includes working with children and adults, sports rehabilitation, minor surgery and pharmacological management.

If you would like a career where making a difference to people's lives and their mobility is important to you, then becoming an expert in the lower limb by training as a podiatrist would fulfil that ambition.

Walls are for scaling, not barriers at the Royal Hospital School

ONE of the largest and most impressive climbing walls in any school in the country has been accredited by the National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme (NICAS).

The wall at the Royal Hospital School, Suffolk, was officially opened in 2016 by Olympic Gold Medallist, Saskia Clark. The GB sailor also opened the refurbished sports hall, a new strength and conditioning room, fitness suite and a martial arts studio as part of the School's £1.2m indoor sports development programme.

"The real benefits of climbing go way beyond the physical development of young people," explained Paddy Ryan, NICAS Awards Director at the Royal Hospital School.

"It teaches a whole range of valuable life skills including responsibility, trust, supporting others, understanding risk, perseverance and commitment."

See for yourself at our open Morning on Saturday 6 May. To book a place or for more information contact registrar, Kate Evers, on 01473 326136 or admissions@royalhospitalschool.org.

Have you thought about state school boarding?

CHOOSE a state boarding school and save more than 50 per cent on fees.

Whilst boarding is an attractive option for many Naval families seeking stability in their children's education, some can find the ongoing costs prohibitive.

This is where state boarding – with its fees of around £4,000 per term – can be an attractive option.

Fees are less than half the cost of comparable independent schools and well below the maximum Continuity of Education Allowance.

Fees are kept at this more manageable level because the education is paid for by the state and parents are only asked to cover the cost of the boarding.

Already a popular choice with

forces families, military children make up around ten per cent of children in the state boarding system's 30-plus English schools.

Value doesn't, however, come at the cost of quality as state boarding facilities are now indistinguishable from those in the independent sector following a £20m programme of investment in boarding accommodation.

Following the national curriculum, academic performance exceeds that of many other schools and state boarding schools regularly top league tables of results.

To find out more about the high-quality education, state-of-the-art facilities and exceptional pastoral care offered in the state boarding system, go to www.stateboarding.org.uk.



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State boarding is less than half the cost of independent boarding because government pays for the education. Offering comfortable and homely boarding, top-class facilities and great academic results, state boarding schools are an attractive, affordable option for forces families.

Take a closer look and see how your Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) could work harder for you and your family.



The Royal Hospital School is a leading co-educational independent school for 11 to 18 year olds, located in 200 acres of Suffolk countryside. It has a thriving Combined Cadet Force, 65% of pupils board full time and more than 200 pupils have a connection to the armed services.

Fees are discounted for services families eligible for CEA and all RN and RM personnel, both retired and serving, can apply for means-tested assistance with fees.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL

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Dauntsey's Canadian adventure

DAUNTEY'S are thrilled to announce that our world famous pilot cutter, the Jolie Brise, will cross the Atlantic for a third time with the school as it joins the International Rendezvous 2017 Tall Ships Regatta this summer – a 7,000 nautical mile transatlantic race visiting Portugal, Bermuda, America, Canada and France.

Rendezvous 2017 Tall Ships Regatta offers participants a unique chance to embark on an epic adventure, whilst commemorating the rich history of sailing in Canada and around the world.

This year's regatta will be particularly special as it marks the 150th anniversary of the Canadian

Confederation, the process by which the colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were united into one Dominion of Canada.

"We are serious about adventure here at Dauntsey's and it doesn't get much more adventurous than crewing a Tall Ship in the Rendezvous Regatta," said head teacher Mark Lascelles.

"Each leg will offer an amazing experience in terms of sailing and exposure to rare and unusual sea-life but the 30-day leg between Canada and France is a unique opportunity for some of our older pupils to experience a transatlantic crossing. We look forward to tracking their progress this summer."

Study wherever you are with Marine Society

MARINE Society exists to help seafarers get ahead in their careers by offering everything they need to succeed; from GCSE and A level courses right through to master's and doctorate degrees – no matter where you are in the world, with Marine Society you will never miss an opportunity to learn new skills and gain qualifications.

As an MOD-approved provider for the Standard Learning Credit Scheme and, thanks to the generosity of Greenwich Hospital, Marine Society are able to offer significant education grants meaning you can drastically reduce the cost of learning.

With hundreds of years of experience educating seafarers, the team have a unique

understanding of the working environment and difficulties seafarers face while studying at sea. Whether deployed on operations, alongside, or on a base, Marine Society are committed to giving seafarers the best possible chance to reach their learning and career goals.

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Queen's glowing report

QUEEN'S College, Taunton, has a rich tradition of educating children from Royal Navy families.

CPO Stuart Bartlett and his wife Elizabeth have twin daughters, Eleanor and Caitlin, in Year 9.

"From the minute we arrived on open day we were made to feel welcome and any questions we had were answered open and honestly," Stuart explained.

"Everyone expects a school to be at its best on an open day but, looking beyond this, we could see a family-values-run school, where pupils were championed to excel in their own fields. Yes, the facilities were impressive but also the welfare of the child seemed paramount to all."

"While not a military boarding school, Queen's has a significant Service boarding community. The school therefore understands the unique situation of Service life and both its challenges and rewards."

Stuart continued: "Their school parents – our children's words not ours – are always available to overcome any problems which, while seeming trivial at first, can easily magnify to excess when mum and dad are not around to placate or rectify."

"As our girls have progressed through Senior School, slowly but surely more freedom has been granted and therefore some degree of autonomy, especially regarding time and work management."

"Without realising it, they are gaining life skills we could only dream of at that age."

"The comprehensive and honest feedback from the school regarding their academic progress, combined with the maturity we have seen over a few short years, has fully vindicated our decision."

Find out more at www.queenscollege.org.uk, emailing registrar@queenscollege.org.uk or calling 01823 340830.

If you are interested in advertising in the next education feature in our September edition, contact us on 023 9262 3553 or email advertising@navynews.co.uk.

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MA Naval History offers a unique opportunity to study the history of the Royal Navy at postgraduate level. Studied either full time or part time by distance learning, you will have the option to blend your online study with dedicated activities on our campus at the home of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth. This will include unparalleled behind-the-scenes access to the National Museum of the Royal Navy's experts, archives and historic ships.

FIND OUT MORE:

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E: hss-enquiries@port.ac.uk
T: +44 (0)23 9284 2992


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Book your place: 01304 245073
www.doyrms.com/Open-Mornings
www.doyrms.com

*Fees are reviewed annually



Grand Duke of York's

DUKE of York Royal Military School in Dover recently welcomed a new principal, Alex Foreman, who has moved from Kings School in Germany.

Mr Foreman's background with British Forces Germany, has enabled him to appreciate the benefit that military values and a military ethos can have on the learning culture of a school, and which the students from both military and non-military backgrounds who study here fully embrace.

The school's international musical production of *The Phantom of the Opera* was spectacularly performed over four nights in late November. Partnering with West Point High School, Virginia, in the United States, students magnificently rose to the challenge of gruelling dance, singing and acting rehearsals while working with another cast 3,500 miles away.

Funded by Old Dukie Paul Harrington and Law Firm Irwin Mitchell, 31 Junior Dukies from Years 7 and 8 visited Holland for a short developmental hockey tour in half term.

They trained really hard and it is starting to pay off, as the U13 junior A team boys secured a confident win over Harvey Grammar School.

And finally, a 'thank you' from senior prefect Sophie:

"Seven years have gone by so fast, and it feels like only yesterday when I was a fresh-faced Year 7 getting lost on the way to lessons. Seven years sounds like a long time, however it has been the most amazing experience and has truly flown by."

Not only has this school provided me with some brilliant learning opportunities and sporting experiences, but also a group of friends that I am happy to call my family, and memories to carry for a lifetime. Having climbed the ladder to where I am now, I am very grateful that I made the decision to not only come to this school, but to continue on my journey into Sixth Form.

This Sixth Form is prestigious, with an excellent approach to learning, great opportunities to undertake responsibilities, and a huge network of support for university and life after school.

Nothing has given me such a sense of pride than representing the school in netball, hockey and tennis; going from Year 7, having never picked up a netball before, to being appointed 1st team netball captain this year.

My wish for all those who are on this journey is to embrace what school life has to offer; this school has made me, and will make you, life-ready, and so my final words are: "Thank you to my teachers and peers for shaping me into the independent and well-rounded person I will be when leaving through the school gates in July."

Recognise a technical expert

THE Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) is calling for nominations for its Armed Forces Technician of the Year Award. The award recognises a technician in the UK Armed Forces who has demonstrated exceptional engineering.

Last year's winner, SSgt Nicholas Statham, Clerk of Works in the Corps of Royal Engineers, was chosen for project-managing the construction of a mission-critical fuel storage facility in Cyprus.

He also ensured fuel was available during critical maintenance of permanent fuel installations at RAF Brize Norton.

Both projects required him to make complex technical decisions in potentially hazardous situations.

By nominating a technician for this award you show that you value both their work and the vital role engineering technicians fulfil. The award, says SSgt Statham, "highlights the

important role that all technicians play in the Armed Forces, in making sure the right things are in place to keep our operations running effectively."

The award promotes engineering technicians' work to a wider audience, as winners are celebrated at the IET's Annual Achievement Awards Ceremony attended by engineers and technicians from around the world.

SSgt Statham is keen for the Armed Forces to take advantage of the IET's award: "I'd really like to see more technicians from the Armed Forces coming forward and entering these awards in the future, so we can ensure that the people we work with continue to understand and value our work."

Do you know someone who could be IET Technician of the Year 2017? Submit your nomination before 5pm on May 26 2017 via www.theiet.org/techawards.



ACHIEVEMENT

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Deadline for
entries 26 May 2017

IET Armed Forces Technician of the Year Award

Show your appreciation for a technician

If a serving technician in your unit has made an exceptional contribution, nominate them for the IET Armed Forces Technician of the Year Award.

The award is open to all engineering and technology technicians who are currently serving members of the United Kingdom Armed Forces.

If you know a serving technician who deserves recognition, it's time to nominate them today.

NOMINATE NOW!

The winning technician will receive a trophy, certificate, £1,000 and two years free IET membership.



Complete the online form by 26 May 2017 at

www.theiet.org/techawards

Enjoy Perrott Hill's 'family atmosphere'

LOCATED on the edge of the Dorset and Somerset border, children thrive at Perrott Hill because of the family atmosphere, excellent teaching and breadth of extracurricular activities and opportunities.

Boarding is a key part of life and our experienced boarding team support children as they become more independent and learn important skills from being organised to teamwork.

Improvements to our boarding facilities include a new common room for boys and girls and reconfiguration of the boarding space as our boarding provision continues to go from strength to strength.

Our new Roundhouse in the woods has been a popular addition to our Forest School and served as a perfect base for hosting a special summer event

with local primary schools.

Designed to blend into the landscape, a new purpose-built music school to enhance our music provision and inspire generations of musicians has recently been completed.

Our sporting teams continue to have fantastic seasons from individual athletic and swimming performances to team sports including rugby, hockey, netball and cricket.

To find out more about life at Perrott Hill, come along to our Summer Term open mornings on Friday 12 and Saturday 13 May. These provide a wonderfully informal way to visit the school, meet current pupils and chat with our head, Tim Butcher.

Email admissions secretary Nola Stone on nstone@perrott hill.com or call 01460 72051.



Perrott Hill

Time and space for a full education



Perrott Hill's Independent Schools Inspectorate Report was outstanding, with the top mark of 'Excellent' awarded in each and every category. We encourage you to read the Tatler Schools Guide 2017 and the Good Schools Guide reports which capture the values and ethos of this flourishing co-educational boarding school.

Perrott Hill, North Perrott, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 7SL 01460 72051 www.perrott hill.com admissions@perrott hill.com

Bromsgrove – more than a school

BROMSGROVE School's results are impressive, but Bromsgrove is much more than a place to get good grades; it prides itself on being a happy school where children of all ages can thrive both academically and outside of the classroom.

The 2016 ISI inspection rated Bromsgrove as excellent in every category and the most recent Good Schools Guide, following inspection in February 2017, states that Bromsgrove has "a sense of energy and hard work" and that "the school looks for what every individual is good at

and helps them find their niche and passion."

Bromsgrove has a vibrant arts scene with numerous opportunities for pupils to perform both large and small projects. A new performing arts centre with a concert hall and multiple rehearsal areas is currently under construction, to be completed by September 2017.

There is considerable strength, too, in sports and a large number of representatives at county, regional and national level. The school's U18 rugby team were

winners of the NatWest schools' trophy in 2015 and 2016 and semi-finalists in 2017. Girls are national champions in netball at U18 and have teams playing in national finals at U15 and U16.

There is an extensive activity programme with optional Saturday activities when pupils may select from a diverse range of recreational and academic activities.

Catering for 1,600 pupils aged three to 18 on three sites, the school is a small global community – a place to live, work and make friends for life.

Welbeck – for the officer of tomorrow

WELBECK is a dynamic residential environment where ambitious young men and women gain in self-confidence, thrive academically and are encouraged to make the most of every opportunity.

These pre-selected students are prepared for engineering and technical careers as officers in the Armed Forces or as a civilian within the civil service.

At Welbeck, committed teachers deliver a challenging STEM (Science, Technology,

Engineering and Maths)-focused A-Level curriculum and pastoral staff ensure the happiness and success of each student whilst developing values of integrity, responsibility and a genuine sense of service.

Upon successful completion of their A-Levels, students will read technical or engineering degrees at some of the UK's leading universities where they are supported within the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme and

receive an annual bursary of £4,000.

After graduation students will commence Initial Officer Training at Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, or Royal Air Force College Cranwell. Civil Service students will start the Defence Engineering and Science Group Graduate Programme.

To find out more or to book an open day visit www.dsfc.ac.uk.



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For potential engineers with drive, ambition and ability, Welbeck is where potential turns into bright futures as officers in the armed forces or civil service.

- In 2016, 34% of all A levels were awarded at A* or A and 81% achieved A* - C
- Tuition funded by the Ministry of Defence with means-tested boarding fees
- State-of-the-art facilities with en suite accommodation
- 100% of students on the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme were offered a place at University in 2016
- Students receive £4000 per year bursary whilst at university

Visit www.dsfc.ac.uk to order or download a prospectus and book a place on one of our upcoming Open Days:

Saturday 13 May 2017

Saturday 17 June 2017

WELBECK



Jutland revisited

MORE than 20 of the world's finest naval historians will converge on Portsmouth to 're-fight' Jutland and discuss the battle's impact on World War 1.

The National Museum of the Royal Navy is hosting a three-day international conference – the first of its kind – featuring leading historians and archaeologists who will explore the legacy and wider impact of the battle.

Speakers from across the world will address the conference, including Dr Holger Herwig, one of the world's leading experts on the Kaiser's Navy and Germany in the Great War, Dr David Stevens from the Australian War Memorial, and Dr Stephan Huck from the German Naval Museum.

Naval historian Dr Andrew Gordon, author of *The Rules of the Game* – for many the definitive book on the battle – will speak, as will Dr Innes McCartney, renowned for his work on the wrecks of Jutland.

Subjects discussed will include the Maritime Archaeology Trust's work on the recently discovered Jutland survivor in Portsmouth Harbour; the impact of unrestricted submarine warfare, the cinema's record of the battle, and the battle from the air.

Evening activities feature a drinks reception with a view of the National Museum's blockbuster exhibition *36 Hours: Jutland 1916, The Battle That Won The War*, an exclusive opportunity to dine onboard HMS Victory (additional charge) and a special screening of *Die versunkene Flotte*, a silent German feature film about the battle made in 1926.

Tickets for all three days (May 31, June 1 and 2) cost £225. An early bird rate of £200 is available before April 30. Day tickets range from £75 to £100 and a student concession rate for three days is £180.

For further details, and to book, visit www.nmrn.org.uk/jutland-conference

Sports Lottery

Feb 11: £5,000 – PO D Zammit; £1,800 – Mne S Wilson; £800 – AB C Geoghegan; £600 – CPO B Goodall; £500 – Mne J Trowbridge; £400 – PO G Renner. Feb 18: £5,000 – Lt S Makosz; £1,800 – Lt Cdr T Evison; £800 – Lt Cdr R Nash; £600 – ET(ME) S Farrow; £500 – AB1 J Richardson; £400 – AB1 S Critchlow. Feb 25: £5,000 – AB A Green; £1,800 – AB D Mencarini; £800 – AB E Rice; £600 – PO M Elton; £500 – Mne W Keogh; £400 – L/Cpl H Dippenhaar. March 4: £5,000 – AB G Abraham; £1,800 – Lt M Hayes; £800 – ET(WE) C Yates; £600 – AB R Paterson; £500 – Sgt J Laing; £400 – AB C Snook.

NAVY NEWS

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The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

Deaths

CAPT Thomas M Le Marchand. Gained a Naval scholarship to Tonbridge School and entered BRNC Dartmouth 1959. Assigned to Submarine Service, he was a young lieutenant navigator in HMS Warspite 1968. After Perisher command course 1971 he was promoted to Lt Cdr and captained HMS Narwhal. During Falklands Conflict was in command of HMS Valiant; mentioned in dispatches for sending more than 300 early warnings of imminent air attack to amphibious task force. 1978-80 military assistant to Governor of Gibraltar, then to two First Sea Lords after promotion to captain. Captain 7th Frigate Sqn while CO of HMS Cleopatra and Captain 3rd Submarine Sqn. Director of Naval Safety (Personnel) in 1993 before leaving the RN and becoming director of SSAFA. Dec 19. Aged 75.

Capt John S Shillingford DL. HMS Cochran, Bulwark, Centurion, Dolphin, Pembroke, Apollo, Wherry, RAN Vendetta, NATO, CinC Fleet and Adm Comm Reserves. Jan 18.

Capt Edward M G Johnstone. HMS Eagle, Lowestoft, Dryad, President, BRNC and DN Plans. Jan 17.

Cdr Keith C D Watson. DCDS, DN Plans, HMS Heron, Saker, Dryad, Mercury, Eagle, Burghhead Bay, Seahawk, Harrier, Glory, Glasgow and RNC Greenwich. Feb 16. Aged 91.

Col John D Shallow MC RM. RM Deal, Eastney, Plymouth, HQ Cdo Forces, HQ Tg Pm RM, HMS President, Victory (RNB), Newfoundland, 40 & 41 Cdo, ITCRM and BRNC Dartmouth. Feb 1. Aged 89.

Maj Peter N Thompson RM. CTCRM Lympstone, HQ RMR, RM Deal and Eastney, 3 Cdo and 45 Cdo RM, HMS President, Royal Prince and Loch Fyne. Jan 27. Aged 85.

Cdr John B Gallagher. HMS Seahawk, Victorious, Mercury, Fearless, Ashton, Lennox, Agincourt, RANS Watson and Vendetta also DGNM&T and DNOR. Nov 13.

Cdr Richard A Smallwood. HMS Nelson, Collingwood, Andromeda, President, Dido, Naiad, Centaur, NATO Rome and RNEC. Jan 1. Aged 75.

Cdr David R Wardle. HMS Dolphin, Neptune, Osprey, Odin, Astarte, Artemis, Adamant, Tactician, Coruña, Hornet and Plucky. Jan 23. Aged 84.

Cdr Maurice A Tibby. 727, 800, 803 & 813 NAS, NATO Kiel & Ankara, HMS Emperor, Implacable, Indomitable, Centaur, Albion, Daedalus, Fulmar, Heron, Malcolm, SESTS Seafield Park, AIB, MOD DNAW and RNAS Anthorn & Stretton. Feb 10. Aged 92.

Cdr Martin J Duckworth. FOST, DG Ships, MOD Bath, HMS Collingwood, Ganges, Manchester, Antrim, Bristol, Bulwark, Ark Royal and RNEC Manadon. Feb 24. Aged 70.

Lt Cdr John P Martlew. HMS Osprey, Seahawk, Ganges, Albion, Fulmar, Centaur, Hermes, Osprey and 801, 814, 771 NAS. Jan 25.

Lt Cdr Stephen J Bradburn. 814, 706, 824, 849B and 849 NAS, HMS Invincible, Seahawk and Heron. Jan 4.

Lt Cdr Maurice V Ingram. HMS Goldcrest, Terror, Maidstone, Alderney, Sube and MOD Dir Gen Pers Services. Dec 30. Aged 89.

Lt Cdr John C Vivian. HMS Cheviot, Drake, Duchess, Excellent and Chequers. Jan 9. Aged 90.

Lt Cdr Douglas E Reeman RNR (aka author Alexander Kent). Jan 23. Aged 92.

Lt Cdr Guy J Dowling. ASWE, NATO Oslo, HMS Saker, Sirius, Vernon, Naiad, Aberford, Eastbourne, Endeavour, Royalist, Rampart and Birmingham. Feb 5

Lt Cdr Stanley C Farquhar. HMS Warrior, Victory (RNB), Osprey, Heron, Condor, Hermes, Ark Royal, Peregrine, Seahawk, Glory, Ocean, 831 NAS and RM Arbroath. Feb 14.

Lt Cdr Robert G Higgins. MOD DIS, RCN HQ Ottowa, HMS Dolphin, Totem, Ambrose, Tapir, Seneschal, Trespasser and Trentant. Feb 20. Aged 92.

Lt Graham S 'Gus' Fawkner. HMS Ocean, Albion and 809 and 810 NAS. Dec 17.

Lt John W Herbert DSC RNVR. 896 and 881 NAS, HMS Victorious, Pursuer and Implacable. Jan 2. Aged 95.

Lt Sir Brian W Young RNVR. HMS President London RNR. Nov 11. Aged 94.

Lt Gilbert W Clark. 768 NAS, HMS Argus, Formidable and Empress. Dec.

Lt Gordon Firth. HMS Seahawk. Jan 15.

Lt John More RNVR. 753 & 756 NAS and RNAS Katukurunda. Jan 25.

Lt Patrick B Meredith. HMS Cumberland, Orsay, Leeds Castle and Plymouth. Feb 24. Aged 84.

Ronald 'Ron' Nickolay L/Sickberth Attendant. Served 1945-52 HMS Royal Arthur, Triumph (Korean War 1949-50), RNR Chatham and HMS Pembroke. Feb 7. Aged 88.

William 'Bill' Harper AB. HMS Cheviot 1951, member of the association. 2016.

Lt Cts 4040 & 4037. Feb 21. Aged 89.

Lt Richard J Potter. HMS Vanguard, Thorough, Telemachus, Tapir and Maidstone. Feb 19. Aged 85.

Lt William A Penlington RNVR. HMS Daedalus, 842 NAS and RNAS Hinstock. Feb 11.

Lt Phil A 'Tony' Carruthers. HMS Illustrous. Jan 29.

Sub Lt Richard Samuelson RNVR. 1772 NAS and HMS Indefatigable. Feb. Aged 92.

Gilbert 'Gilly' R Howe C/Sgt DCM RM. Joined at Deal 1946 then moved to Eastney, Chatham, joining HMS Sheffield in 1947 (North Atlantic and West Indies). Joined 40 Cdo 1948 in Malta, deploying to Hong Kong then Malaya during the Emergency. Awarded DCM. Returned to Stonehouse 1951 then HMS Vanguard, visiting Holland and the Arctic Circle. Promoted Sgt 1956, served as an instructor. 1962 completed tours in Borneo with 42 Cdo during the Confrontations – awarded MM as part of a combat tracker team engagement. Instrumental in refining techniques for the takedown of terrorist strongholds on oil platforms and ships at sea and was awarded the BEM and MSM; he left the Corps in 1978. Dec 10. Aged 87.

Roy H Leaneay Cpl RM. Joined at 185 Sqn Eastney 1942. Qualified for Combined Ops then drafted to LCF 32, taking troops ashore on D-Day. Later involved with Op Infatuate, landing commandos on Walcheren. 1965 emigrated to Brisbane; founding president of RMA Queensland branch, also secretary and standard bearer; made Life Member for his service. Nov 18. Aged 91.

Donal H Wilson Cpl Sig RM. Joined the Corps for a seven-year engagement plus five years on the Reserve list serving in Korea and Malaya. He ended his RM time aboard HMS Victory, Portsmouth showing visitors around. Dec 27. Aged 83.

Dennis Small L/Cpl RM. Served 1943-46. Trained on landing craft and delivered troops at D-Day. Retrained as part of Bren gun team, served with Scout Carriers for anti-tank platoon in the 32nd Bn of 117th Bde RM. North Devon branch RMA. Nov 11. Aged 91.

Roy Jones RM. Served with Royal Welch Fusiliers and South Wales Borderers in Palestine and Cyprus 1944-47 before joining Royal Marines, serving 1948-55. Joined HMS Belfast and served in Korean waters. Back in UK he completed Coronation duties then joined HMS Ocean for global duties. November 9. Aged 90.

Ray 'Jesse' Owen RM. Served 1945-57 in HMS Vanguard and Vengeance (S Africa, India, Singapore, Hong Kong). After returning with 41 Cdo from Korea joined the SBS and became a frogman. Also served HMS Illustrous as drill instructor. Treasurer of Coventry & District RMA, winning the President's Award in 2011. Nov 20.

Roger A 'Alan' 'Scouse' Page Pock. Served 1965-83 HMS Pembroke, Defender, Sea Eagle, Berry Head, Heron, Apollo, Neptune, Active, Drake, Dartmouth and Leander. Jan 11. Aged 68.

David 'Pussar' Hill PO Seaman. Served HMS Ganges, Leopard, Aurora, Excellent and Cambridge. Dec 21. Aged 65.

Colin Cresswell PO(ME). Served 1950-57 Cossack, Vanguard and Pembroke. Feb 24. Aged 84.

Ronald 'Ron' Nickolay L/Sickberth Attendant. Served 1945-52 HMS Royal Arthur, Triumph (Korean War 1949-50), RNR Chatham and HMS Pembroke. Feb 5.

Lt Cdr Stanley C Farquhar. HMS Warrior, Victory (RNB), Osprey, Heron, Condor, Hermes, Ark Royal, Peregrine, Seahawk, Glory, Ocean, 831 NAS and RM Arbroath. Feb 14.

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Ronald 'Ron

Veterans join Princess Royal at opening of WRNS100 exhibition

Women relive Dauntless days

VETERAN Servicewomen took a trip down Memory Lane during a visit to Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless.

Former members of the Women's Royal Naval Service, along with family members of former World War 2 Wren personnel, visited the Portsmouth warship prior to the launch of the WRNS100 Centenary.

The guests were escorted on board Dauntless by women serving in the Royal Navy and greeted by the ship's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr James Fickling.

The name Dauntless holds a special place in the hearts of all women who served in the WRNS as it bears the name of their former training establishment at Burghfield, near Reading.

Among the veterans visiting was former Leading Wren Radio Operator Melissa Thompson (47) who had served in the WRNS from 1989 and transferred into the RN before retiring from service in 1995.

Melissa, who was one of the first Wrens to go to sea, has donated a number of WRNS items to the *Pioneers to Professionals – Women and the Navy* exhibition.

There were also several men visiting the ship, including two brothers whose mother served as a despatch rider between 1943 and 1945 taking important Naval signals between Cardiff Docks and London on her motorbike.

After the tour of HMS Dauntless the group of veterans attended the official



● Former Wren Lois Saunders (82) talks with LNN Alice Kightley, watched by LS(EW) Natalie Hutchinson and former Leading Radio Operator Mel Thompson aboard HMS Dauntless

opening of the exhibition by the Princess Royal at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in the Historic Dockyard.

The exhibition champions the pioneering women who fought for equal rights in the Royal Navy and tells the story of how women's roles in the Senior Service have changed.

Cdr Inga Kennedy, the most senior female officer in the Naval Service, said: "The formation of the Women's Royal Naval Service 100 years ago was a really

important milestone in the employment of women within the Royal Navy.

"Their achievements laid the foundations for the integrated Naval Service that we have today. We are delighted that HRH The Princess Royal was able to meet so many of our veterans and those still serving under very different conditions of Service today."

Princess Anne held the honorary position of Chief Commandant of the WRNS from 1974 until 1993, when the



● The Princess Royal meets POAET Hannah Quigley during the official opening of the WRNS100 exhibition in Portsmouth

Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury and Louise George

WRNS were disbanded as women were fully integrated into the Royal Navy. Since then the Princess has held the title of Chief Commandant for Women in the Royal Navy.

The formation of the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1917 was seen as an important milestone as it allowed women to work in an official capacity in shore-based roles, thus releasing men to work on the ships.

The pioneering work of these women

paved the way for women in the Royal Navy today.

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● The futuristic form of the US Navy's new Zumwalt-class guided missile destroyers; the controversial programme is scrutinised in the latest edition of World Naval Review

Picture: US Navy

Naval gazing

THE GROVE REVIEW

SINCE 2009 Seaforth Publishing of Barnsley has produced an annual 'World Naval Review' which surveyed the previous year's global naval and naval aviation developments as well as looking at notable contemporary ships and technological matters.

Conrad Waters is the editor, and he has regularly mobilised a set of experts to provide chapters, covering July to the end of June of the previous year.

This 2017 volume (ISBN 978-1-4738-9275-00, £30) therefore covers the second half of 2015 and the first half of 2016, writes Prof Eric Grove.



The 192-page landscape format volume is handsomely produced to Seaforth's usual high standards and is copiously illustrated with many photographs, both black and white and colour, and excellent drawings provided by John Jordan. The book is designed to appeal to a wide market, including enthusiasts who can keep more or less up to date through it, as well as more serious students of naval affairs.

It begins with the usual 'World Fleet Reviews' with three area chapters: North and South America; Indian Ocean and Africa; and Europe and Russia. These are leavened by special analyses of three navies. A trio of chapters on 'significant ships' is then followed by three thematic 'technological reviews'.

The area reviews written by the editor are well-informed analytical summaries of regional developments. In the first individual section USA-based Mrityunjoy Mazumdar provides an historical perspective on the Royal Malaysian Navy. He emphasises the transformation in capability provided by its acquisition of submarines in 2009. These are of the Franco-Spanish 'Scorpene' type and, after considerable operational use, the two boats, Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Razak are being refitted. There are four major Malaysian surface combatants, 11 patrol escorts and 14 fast attack craft. The RMN is in the midst of a programme to reduce the number of its classes to five, a new type of littoral combat ship, the Kedah-class 1,850-tonne patrol vessel (six of which are already in service), 18 multi-purpose 'littoral mission ships', support ships and a submarine force doubled in size. The author concludes that the RMN faces a 'difficult balancing act.' There are question marks over the new programme, whether Malaysian industry can deliver

the equipment and what should be its emphasis, constabulary roles or higher level capabilities to strengthen Malaysia in the developing South China Sea situation.

Another navy facing a mission dilemma is Denmark's, as made clear by Soren Norby of the Royal Naval Defence College. Post-Cold War Denmark impressively took difficult decisions to emphasise global blue water operations with innovative multi-role Absalon-class 'flexible frigates' and the three Huitfeld-class frigates – 'the most powerful ships

the Danish Navy has ever had at its disposal.' Submarines were abandoned as were fast attack craft and minelayers dedicated to Baltic operations.

The recently-changed strategic situation in the Baltic challenges this posture, especially in an atmosphere of financial constraint.

As Norby argues, the new situation creates difficulties in handling both 'international operations whilst undertaking the more local protection of Danish and allied interests in the Baltic. Ultimately,' he argues, 'Denmark's politicians may be forced to choose between the two types of mission or find more money for naval resources.'

Theodore Hughes-Riley then discusses a Dutch Navy that has suffered from budget restrictions in recent years. The once-significant fleet is now down to six frigates, four offshore patrol vessels, two submarines and half a dozen minehunters. The only positive trend has been the building of three major amphibious warfare ships, two LPDs, plus the big 28,000-tonne Karel Doorman intended as a general purpose joint support ship.

Currently mainly used as a fleet tanker, this ship narrowly escaped being sold before commissioning, but her future now seems more secure with shared use with Germany agreed between the two countries.

The author concludes that while the Dutch Navy still remains an effective force, there are serious replacement challenges on the horizon. It is to be hoped that pressures for greater NATO defence expenditure will reverse the trends that almost saw the end of an historically-great navy.

The 'significant ships' section is especially interesting. Tomohiko Tada gives a fascinating and well-informed analysis of the Japanese Akizuki-class destroyers, incremental developments of earlier smaller destroyer classes

but also a breakthrough in terms of anti-air warfare capability with their combination of phased array radars and ESSM (Evolved Sea Sparrow Missiles). The author explains that these ships complement the larger anti-ballistic missile destroyers, dealing with lower-altitude threats, while ABM ships concentrate on higher-altitude threats.

Another interesting ship from the Asia-Pacific region is the Dokdo flat-topped assault ship described by Guy Toremans, a Belgian-based naval writer.

He points out that this impressive 14,000-tonne asset might well be a first step to three ships, the next two being larger and perhaps built to operate F-35B STOVL jets.

The third and largest ship due in 2025 would be a 'significant step on the way towards an ambition to field a true aircraft carrier capability.'

The last ship article is about the huge and futuristic-looking 'destroyer', USS Zumwalt. Edward Feege and Scott Truver of Gryphon Technologies, a Washington-based defence professional and engineering services company, provide an excellent account of the tribulations of this programme, cut from 32 to three ships, as requirements changed and costs escalated.

A major feature of this class is its ability to produce massive amounts of electrical power that will allow the vessels to use innovative weapons technology, notably rail guns, one of which is slated to be fitted to the third ship of the class USS Lyndon B Johnson.

Sadly the article had to be completed before the cancellation of the ships' advanced – and very expensive – Long Range Land Attack Projectiles.

This has put serious question marks over the ships' 155mm gun armament.

In the first 'Technological Review' David Hobbs examines naval aviation in his usual informed and lucid way, although one might have wished for a little more on the serious limitations on recent American carrier deployments.

Norman Friedman's review of 'shipboard anti-ship missiles' makes some typically interesting, but less obvious, points about the importance of target acquisition while the final piece by Jan Ziola gives an insider's account of SMERAS (Submarine Escape and Survival).

In all, the book is a fascinating and useful collection that will inform any interested reader and good value at £30.

Seniors clip Hawks' wings

THE Royal Navy Rugby Union Senior XV beat the Glasgow Hawks 28-17.

The match at the old Anniesland ground at the High School of Glasgow marked the tenth anniversary of a memorial game to commemorate the life of Royal Marine Craig Hodgkinson, who died from an unknown heart defect while playing for the RN.

Navy head coach Ash Coates said: 'We are delighted to play here to mark the anniversary of the memorial match for Craig and to raise money for the Craig Hodgkinson Trust.'

'It is also great preparation for us as we look to defend our Inter-Service title against the RAF and the Army in April.'

Ahead of the match, Rear Admiral John Weale, Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland, hosted a reception to thank the local community for their support to the RN.

The 800-strong crowd packed into the stand and were very supportive – and were rewarded with an action-packed 80 minutes.

It was the Hawks who put the first points on the board; after sustained pressure and some good straight running, space was created for the outside centre to cross the line. The conversion hit the posts and Hawks took a five-point lead.

The visitors responded quickly, and from a line out at their 22, the ball was passed out wide for the Navy to level the score, 5-5, and a successful conversion saw them take a 7-5 lead. Another try soon followed, with a run by Cadywould, converted by Humphrey, to extend the lead 14-5.

But it wasn't all going the Navy's way; losing three line outs in a row.

Hawks had an attacking scrum from a promising position but the ball was knocked on, and before they knew what was going on, inside centre Myers scored a break-away try. Humphrey kicked his third conversion of the night to take the Navy into the break with a convincing 21-5 lead.

At the start of the second half the Navy were dominating both possession and territory but the home side began to show their mettle.

Starting to play their own style of rugby, sustained pressure resulted in a second try of the night for the Hawks, closing the gap to 21-10.

Heartened by the score, Glasgow got possession again and found themselves camped deep in the RN half. The Navy defence responded well, working hard to deny the Hawks another score, but the pressure eventually became too much with the team in blue penalised at the breakdown.

A quick tap from Glasgow led to their third try, which was successfully converted bringing Hawks back into the game at 21-17.

From the restart the ball was won by the Navy and Glasgow, too keen to come up, left a large gap which was exploited by Navy replacement No 21, Rhys Dimmock-Williams.

The kick was straight and the scoreboard showed 28-17 with 15 minutes left to play.

More exciting play followed from both teams but neither was able to make the decisive break. As the final whistle blew, the score remained 28-17.

Kenneth Hamilton, Glasgow Hawks Director of Rugby, said: 'We have enjoyed hosting the Royal Navy here in Glasgow and while we were not victorious, it was definitely an exciting match with seven tries scored and lots of money raised for charity.'

Money raised from the evening was to be divided between the RNRMC and the Craig Hodgkinson Trust.



Pictures: LPhot Stevie Burke and Will Haigh

Turning heads – Navy style

GYMNASTS from eight Naval establishments in the UK took part in the Royal Navy Gymnastic Association's first grassroots competition.

The contest, which was confined to floor and vault disciplines, saw many compete in the sport for the first time as they took part in team and individual events.

International judge Adam Paterson and some of his team oversaw proceedings at Portsmouth Gymnastics Centre.

LPT Hayley Saunders from RNAS Yeovilton said: "I was really nervous about the competition as I have never done anything like this before; we all trained so hard for it."

"I really enjoyed the whole experience and I won my first ever medal – in fact I won two! A bronze for the team event and a bronze for the individual competition."

ET(WE) Alex Anderson from HMS Collingwood said: "It was good to get back into the sport after years of not having the facilities to train, and was great to have the opportunity to start competing again. I had an amazing time."

In true Royal Navy style there was a big helping of humour with wooden spoons awarded for 'splat of the day' and even the 'girliest run towards the vault' award which went to a 6ft 4in male former rugby player.

The association was formed 18 months ago and Hugh Player, director at the association's sponsor Greenwich Hospital, said: "It was a new experience for me to see gymnastics close-up. It was great also to see very new gymnasts competing alongside those with greater experience and higher performance levels, and who are such fine examples to the newcomers."

"Everybody worked and trained so hard to get to the event. It was evident that all were proud to be representing their establishments, and all were hugely encouraged by the day. The whole competition was extremely impressive, and exactly what Service sport should be."

Results:

Men's team: HMS Excellent, HMS Collingwood, HMS Nelson; **Mixed team:** HMS Nelson, HMS Sultan, RNAS Yeovilton;

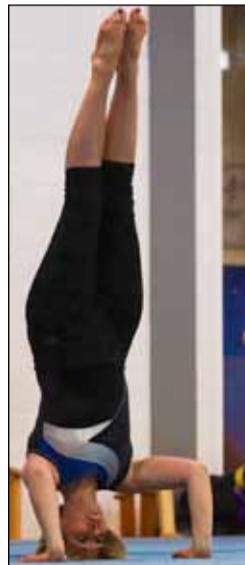
Under-30 men's individual: ET(WE) Alex Anderson, Collingwood, POET(WE) Ben Wright, Collingwood and AET Matt Gough, Sultan, AET Luke Jarvis Yeovilton; **Over-30 men's individual:** Lt Jamie Weller, Lt Cdr Kevin Westbrook and CPO Keith McCormick, all HMS Excellent;

Women's individual: Cpl Jo Barnes, Nelson, LDN Donna Seymour, Northwood and LPT Hayley Saunders, Yeovilton.



● Above, AET Matt Gough; Right, Cpl Jo Barnes; below, Rachel Dunn McGlynn, from HMS Sultan and LPT Aaron Snowdon, of HMS Collingwood

Pictures: LPhot Louise George



● LPT Hayley Saunders of RNAS Yeovilton



● The men's over-30 individual winners, from left, Lt Cdr Kevin Westbrook, Lt Jamie Weller and CPO Keith McCormick; Left: LPT Kurtis Jaques from RNAS Yeovilton

Secret to success of indoor rowers

THE success of the Royal Navy Indoor Rowing team can partly be attributed to a global indoor league.

More than 600 people take part in the indoor league month challenge, with league tables showing individual categories and wider tables to encourage personal development and challenges.

WO1 Tiny Nash (HMS Temeraire) is ranked in the top three for both his individual men's 50-plus heavyweight and best man categories.

CPO Tim 'Apples' Cox (HMS Collingwood) is ranked second in his men's lightweight 40-plus category, and his adjusted normalised score is close to Nash's.

Lt Cdr Jim Thomson (NCHQ) and CPOPT Daz 'The Lion' Hoare (HMS Bristol), who both compete in the men's heavyweight 40-plus category, have been neck-and-neck in first and second places through six monthly challenges to date, with two challenges remaining.

Lt Stu Moss (HMS Sultan) and Lt Cdr Rory West (HMS Collingwood) are close behind. Flying the White Ensign for Royal Navy Women has been Lt Cdr Ruth Guest (INM Alverstoke), who is currently leading the women's 19-plus lightweight category and just a few places behind Nash and Cox in the all-encompassing open.

Lt Cdr Charlotte Peattie (JSU Northwood) is currently fourth in the women's heavyweight 30-plus.

Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol), Sgt Sam Arnold (CTCRM) and PO Matt Parkinson (HMS Collingwood) are currently second, third and fifth in the men's heavyweight 30-plus category, with Lt Callum Fraser (HMS Vanguard) and



● PO Matt Parkinson

Cpl Dave Moody (40 Cdo) second and third in the men's heavyweight 19-plus category.

POPT Ian Robinson (JSU Northwood) has maintained second place in the men's lightweight 30-plus.

Lt Cdr Conor O'Neill (HMS Montrose) is one place (13th) ahead of top 2016/17 RN 2K performer Lt Craig Guest (HMS Collingwood) in the men's heavyweight 30-plus, by virtue of the latter being unable to record one month's score.

The advantage of the IRL is the fact that the eight monthly challenges (4mins, mile, 6,344m, 5k, 1 min, 2k, 10k, 500m), can be factored into training and racing programmes, and also provide opportunities for a wide range of involvement.

Most welcome within IRL is the sight of two Royal Navy teams (eight best scores from ten) in the top six of the team competition, with a team comprised from the RN Indoor Rowing Performance Programme top of the table.

For more details visit www.indoorrowers.org



Deep helps Millie to title success

SUBMARINER AB Brett Wild led Paralympic skier Millie Knight to gold medal success at the World Para Alpine Skiing Championships.

Brett, a steward on board HMS Ambush, accompanied partially-sighted Millie to the event in Tarvisio in the Italian Alps.

The pair arrived filled with confidence following their success in the Innerkrem World Cup Speed races in Austria, where they won gold in every race.

Building on this success, and with only a few days training in between, Millie and Brett went on to win gold in the first race, which was the Downhill event. The duo became the first British snow sports World Champions.

Unfortunately Millie crashed through the finish line, travelling at 115 kilometres per hour, while winning the race, severely bruising an ankle and knee as well as sustaining minor concussion.

In spite of her injuries

Millie won silver medals in the other four disciplines she was competing in.

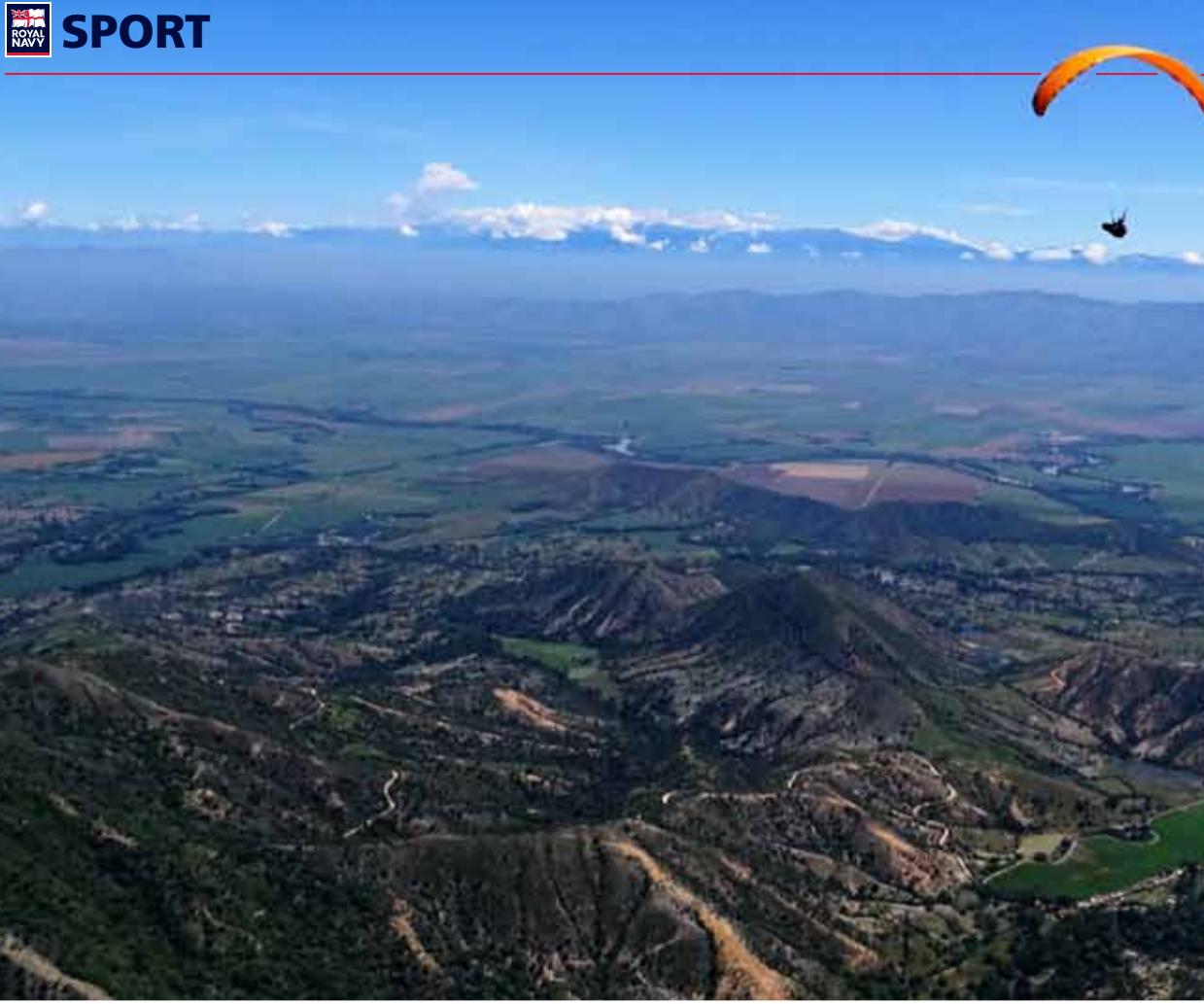
The most important thing that the pair took from the championships was that they won the gold they required to secure maximum funding from UK Sport.

"I wouldn't be here without the tremendous support from the National Lottery and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity for enabling me to ski with Millie," said Brett.

The pair have been training and competing together since February 2016 when Brett was invited to take part in a trial with Millie.

Following the three-day trial and then a successful month in Aspen for the World Cup Finals, Brett was asked to be Millie's full-time guide.

They are currently off to South Korea to compete in the Paralympic test event and World Cup Finals where they aim to add to their collection of medals.



PARAGLIDER WO2 Nigel 'Bert' Lane RM takes to the skies over Columbia.

The UKAF Paragliding trip to South America featured some incredible flying, with many pilots achieving personal bests with flights in excess of 90km.

The trip marked the start of the flying calendar for Royal Navy pilots as they prepare for the Inter-Service Championships in June.

Training camps will be

running throughout the spring and early summer in Spain, Turkey, and in the UK at the Peak District, Lake District and Wessex.

The final event of the UKAF flying year will be over the Himalayas in the town of Bir-Billing within the Himachal Pradesh region of Northern India.

Support to fly in all these overseas activities is provided by the RN/RM Sports Lottery.



Bergen prove too hot for Somerset

HMS Somerset's **rugby union** team took on a Bergen RFC side boasting several Norwegian internationals.

The Bergen side quickly established a 7-0 lead before LET Robert Thomas scored a try.

Bergen responded with a try before the hosts went 12-5 ahead. The second period saw a series of solid scrums and some powerful running by Somerset's back row.

Sustained pressure resulted in two quick tries, the first from Std Ratu Roko-Kurusasa, followed by ET(WE) Josh Morgan.

But Bergen soon hit back with three tries and won the encounter 31-20.

Somerset's CO Cdr Tim Berry said: "Somerset RFC once again entertained with some outstanding skill, determination and team work."

"It was a great pleasure watching and although the end result was defeat, each and every player gave 100 per cent for the full 80."

Warm welcome

A FRIENDLY **rugby** fixture against Malone RFC was the order of the day during HMS Westminster's visit to Belfast.

The home side fielded a mixed team of veterans and colts and were able to outsmart Westminster's players in the first quarter, going 27-0 up.

The rest of the game was a different story, with Westminster scoring tries through LET(ME) Roger Mills and SC Jonathan Waugh, but this wasn't enough to prevent the home side taking a couple of late opportunities to make the score 44-10 to Malone.

Belfast was the Type 23's first UK port visit since her refit and provided a short break from sea trials.



Westminster's CO Cdr Simon Kelly said: "This was a fantastic visit for HMS Westminster, our first since emerging from refit. The hospitality shown to us, particularly by Malone RFC, was outstanding.

"I was particularly pleased to be able to welcome a number of ship's company's families on board so that they could show off their home."

HMS Westminster will return to the Fleet this year after an extensive maintenance period to install the new Sea Ceptor missile system, a new medium range radar and an improved computer system.

The upgrade will make the ship the Royal Navy's most advanced submarine hunter.

Women join men on the winners' rostrum Ice, ice Navy



● Above, the four Royal Navy and Royal Marines four female bobsledders and, below, the men; Right, action from Lillehammer in Norway



ROYAL Navy bobsledders took the men and women's individual titles at the Inter-Service Ice Championships.

Held at the Olympic track at Lillehammer in Norway, the Senior Service welcomed back Olympic GB bobsledder Sgt John 'Jacko' Jackson and Sgt Ash Morris as their two experienced drivers, with the remainder of the team novices.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Bobsleigh team's brakemen held a week of sprint and sled-pushing training at Norton Manor in Somerset, home of 40 Commando, prior to travelling to Norway.

Each day prior to sliding, drivers conducted a track walk with the coach to familiarise themselves with the layout, discuss the more challenging areas and help memorise the racing lines.

Ice sports are like no other, it is all or nothing from the first slide. The first time the drivers are able to learn their skill and feel how the sled handles is by beginning at the "damen" start, which is still three quarters of a mile to the finish and sees the athletes reach speeds of 60mph.

The only time to hit the brakes is on the finishing straight. Once the drivers have gained confidence from here, they progress to the top of the track, and are given 17 corners to master at a top speed of 80mph.

The men entered four sleds and the women's team had two sleds in the competition, with one novice driver, AB Bex Andrews.

"It was one of the most testing but enjoyable experiences I have had which requires a large amount of mental focus," she said. "Knowing if you get it wrong it isn't just me in the sled, but the brakewoman too. The coaching from Jacko and Lee Johnson was excellent."

The Inter-Service competition consists of four *laufs* (runs) over two days with the winning sled having the quickest combined time.

Both the men and the women's individual competitions were won by the Royal Navy sleds of Sgt Jackson and Cpl Sam Dalrymple, LAET Rachel Roberston and Lt Alex Kelley.

The men took second in the team competition and the women third.

It is hoped the team can continue this success next year and both squads will grow so next year there is the opportunity to enter the maximum number of seven sleds in the competition.

For anyone interested in getting involved in the sport, contact Sgt Ash Morris at NAVYTRG CTCRM-HQ DTC SNCO@MOD.UK or Lt Alex Kelley at NAVY TRG BRNC-URNU WALES CO@mod.uk

Sweetest of wins for squash squad

THEY had a five-year plan.

And it all came together as the Royal Navy Senior men's squash team took the Inter-Service title for the first time in 62 years.

"Win the title," was the message in 2012 from Royal Navy Squash Rackets Association chairman Cdr Steve Shaw, who said of the victory: "The win was a result of a dedicated team effort the likes that had not been seen in Navy squash for decades."

Inspired by British Cycling's mantra of 'marginal gains', the association has worked hard to develop young talent, assisted by investment from the RNRM Sports Lottery.

As a result, not since the playing days of John Peake, the Royal Navy Squash Champion in 1948, has the RN boasted a pool of talent capable of mounting such a challenge on the Senior Championship title.

So it was fitting that he was present to witness the occasion at HMS Temeraire, along with 30 other ex-Royal Navy squash players collectively spanning 70 years.

On the first day of competition, the squad were up against the RAF, a team that have traded blows with the RN side in recent seasons.

It was a relief when the Navy No5 emerged victorious from a gutsy 3-2 victory to set the ball rolling; the win came despite injury, which forced his subsequent retirement from further competition.

Following this victory, Lt Cdr Matt Ellicott, Sub Lt Steve Warren and L/Cpl Ryan McKechnie emerged creditably victorious against tough opponents and the RN took the tie 4-1 leading into a second day showdown with the Army.

Navy skipper Lt Cdr Phil Clark said: "The match against the Army was even closer and was played to an unbelievably high standard."

"Sub Lt Tom Walter stepped in at number five to kick things off, in a string that the RN could not afford to lose."

"Playing up from the U25 team at the last moment and in spite of the pressure, he showed immense maturity against a much-fancied opponent."

"In a match that threatened to last for hours, Walter's temperament and grit saw him close out the match 3-1."

The tension mounted as Ellicott took to the court against the Army No3, both 'veterans' of Inter-Services' combat but the Navy man had never emerged on a championship-winning team.

As in previous seasons, Ellicott



● Royal Navy Squash Racket Association Secretary Robin Young and team member Sub Lt Steve Warren – also pictured on court right – with the trophy

Pictures: LPhot Paul Hall

proved that he had too much for a tenacious and robust opponent, again winning 3-1.

By now, the gallery was full as players and supporters of the competition struggled for a view for what could be the deciding rubber.

Ironically, next up was Lt Damien 'Daisy' May, previous RN champion but also for a few interim years an RAF player, who was making his return to dark blue.

Two years ago, he thwarted the RN team in their pursuit of victory by pipping Ellicott in a winner-takes-all-match; now he had to step on court to restore the pride of RN Squash against a former top-70 world-ranked Army player.

The crowd were treated to an exhibition of first-class squash, with May playing his part and nearly forcing the match into a deciding fifth game but in losing 3-1, the championship result was still anyone's for the taking.

Next into the fray was Sub Lt Warren. The Navy player pushed into a 2-0 lead, winning the first two games by close margins but appearing in control and coping admirably with the pressure and his opposite number's ebullient, yet effective style.



Lt Cdr Robin Young, Navy Squash Development Officer, said: "In the third game, Warren showed his class, slaying the Army man with some showcase shots and tremendous composure."

As the ball rolled out of the nick on match point, Warren raised his arms aloft realising the importance of the occasion and he turned to a crowd of RN

players and supporters that had exploded in celebration at what had been achieved.

The RNSRA aims to retain the men's title next year but will be putting more focus on the women, U25 and veterans' teams who all finished third at this year's championships.

Anyone interested in joining a winning sport should look for RNSRA on the pdev portal.

THE world of Navy sport has paid tribute to the Service's 'Mr Hockey', who died after a short battle with cancer.

Lt Cdr Alan Walker dedicated his life to the sport – so much so that the stadium in Portsmouth where Royal Navy teams play is named in his honour.

Alan joined the Navy in January 1960 as an artificer apprentice, but was soon seized by a passion for both swimming and hockey, the latter especially, representing the RN and Armed Forces; he appeared more than 100 times for the RN representative side between 1968-1985.

Off the pitch, he gained Level 3 and 4 coaching qualifications and by the mid-1980s was a much-sought-after coach.

He was England Hockey's 'video man'

at the 1986 World Cup at Willsden when the hosts were runners-up and after the tournament Alan was invited to take up the role of Hockey Association staff coach.

On leaving the Navy that same year, he took up the role of RN Hockey Association Secretary and went on to coach Havant HC, helping them become one of the forces in the land in the 1990s. Just for good measure he was instrumental in resurrecting Gosport HC, who became one of the top sides in the county.

All this helped with his appointment as England U21 men's manager. He was in charge for 61 matches between 1992 and 1994 – and would have been at the helm for eight more if the team hadn't been 'bombed out' at the Indira Ghandi

Memorial Tournament in Mumbai in March 1993.

Throughout, Alan continued his role as the chief coach of the Royal Navy and UK Armed Forces teams. He guided the RN to double Inter-Service title triumphs in 2004 and 2005, inaugurating the most successful run in the team's history until Alan retired in 2010... which prompted a special tournament in Portsmouth with nine command teams playing in Alan's honour; the Scottish sides presented Alan with a special kilt in recognition.

Even upon retirement Alan continued his work as vice president of the RN, UK Armed Forces, Gosport and Nordics Hockey Club, acted as a patron of the Hockey Museum, and in his final days

was still organising the inaugural fixture for the Nordics Ladies which took place on the Sunday after his death.

"Alan was truly Mr Hockey, especially in the Royal Navy, an absolute gentleman who always had time for everybody and couldn't do enough for you. He will be sadly missed by all," said his friend and current secretary of the RN Hockey Association Steve Lemon. "His dedication to grass-roots hockey in the Royal Navy has made it one of the most popular sports in the Service."

"No-one knows exactly how many coaches Alan qualified in his time as a coach educator, but it's safe to say his legacy is being carried out on hockey pitches all around the UK."



● WO1 Sean Childs, No 35, in the men's veterans' race

Runners endure tough conditions

NEARLY 100 of the best endurance athletes from all three Services took part in this year's Inter-Service Cross-Country Championships at HMS Raleigh.

The race saw the best cross-country runners from the Royal Navy, Army and RAF compete against each other over four separate races.

The course itself was very tough, technical, undulating and muddy, with senior and veteran men's races taking in a nine kilometre (2½ lap) course, and the women and under-23 men races completing six kilometres (1½ laps).

Team honours were jointly split between the RAF and the Army with the RAF winning both the senior and men veterans' races and the Army being crowned champions in the under-23 and women's categories.

The Royal Navy took second place in the women's team event.

Team member POPT exercise rehabilitation instructor Julie Stroud, who is currently based at Raleigh, said: "This is the best I've ever seen the women's

team perform in cross country and with definitely the highest standard."

"The speed and muddy conditions around the course made this a really tough competition and definitely, for me, the hardest race I've done all season."

WO1(PT) Sean Childs, the Base Warrant Officer at BRNC, competed in the veterans' competition for the Royal Navy.

He said: "The standard of competition at this level is extremely fierce, and with the numbers being restricted for each event, there is nowhere to hide."

"Usual race tactics for these championships go out of the window, as everyone is keen to impress to stay with the main pack; therefore you have to go out much harder from the start than you are usually accustomed to."

"Both Lt Cdr Gingie Gough, the championship co-ordinator, and the PT department at Raleigh put on a great event and should be praised."



● Winners Cpl Aled Jones and AET Emily Newton



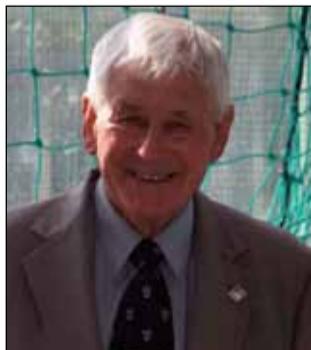
Royal retains title

REIGNING duathlon champion Cpl Aled Jones RM retained his title at the 2017 Royal Navy/Royal Marine championships.

AET Emily Newton took the female title at RNAS Merryfield in Somerset, where 42 Service and civilians took part.

Competitors faced a 2.5-mile run, ten-mile bike ride and 1.5-mile run.

Tributes are paid to Navy's 'Mr Hockey'



● Lt Cdr Alan Walker

THE world of Navy sport has paid tribute to the Service's 'Mr Hockey', who died after a short battle with cancer.

Lt Cdr Alan Walker dedicated his life to the sport – so much so that the stadium in Portsmouth where Royal Navy teams play is named in his honour.

Alan joined the Navy in January 1960 as an artificer apprentice, but was soon seized by a passion for both swimming and hockey, the latter especially, representing the RN and Armed Forces; he appeared more than 100 times for the RN representative side between 1968-1985.

Off the pitch, he gained Level 3 and 4 coaching qualifications and by the mid-1980s was a much-sought-after coach.

He was England Hockey's 'video man'

at the 1986 World Cup at Willsden when the hosts were runners-up and after the tournament Alan was invited to take up the role of Hockey Association staff coach.

On leaving the Navy that same year, he took up the role of RN Hockey Association Secretary and went on to coach Havant HC, helping them become one of the forces in the land in the 1990s. Just for good measure he was instrumental in resurrecting Gosport HC, who became one of the top sides in the county.

All this helped with his appointment as England U21 men's manager. He was in charge for 61 matches between 1992 and 1994 – and would have been at the helm for eight more if the team hadn't been 'bombed out' at the Indira Ghandi

Memorial Tournament in Mumbai in March 1993.

Throughout, Alan continued his role as the chief coach of the Royal Navy and UK Armed Forces teams. He guided the RN to double Inter-Service title triumphs in 2004 and 2005, inaugurating the most successful run in the team's history until Alan retired in 2010... which prompted a special tournament in Portsmouth with nine command teams playing in Alan's honour; the Scottish sides presented Alan with a special kilt in recognition.

Even upon retirement Alan continued his work as vice president of the RN, UK Armed Forces, Gosport and Nordics Hockey Club, acted as a patron of the Hockey Museum, and in his final days

Navy team set some top times on Cresta Run

Crew's control

ROYAL MARINES Colonel Kev Oliver flies down the Cresta Run on his way to recording his fastest-ever time on the world-famous track.

Col Oliver was in action for the Royal Navy Cresta Team, who took on the Army and RAF for the Inter-Service title.

The run, at St Moritz in Switzerland, is 1.25km long and is the steepest natural ice track in the world, dropping 157 vertical metres.

First built in 1884, it is constructed from scratch from fresh snow and ice every year.

The Royal Navy novices arrived a week before the main team to be welcomed to the Cresta Run by the "Death Talk" and beginner school, before developing their skills under the watchful eye of Cpl Mike Franey-Starling.

The aim for beginners, who start riding from 'Junction' just above half way, is to qualify to ride the Cresta from the top of the run; top riders are the only real Cresta riders as the gradient from top is something to behold.

As the days passed the beginners' times began to close on the elusive top qualifying, but frequent falls at Shuttlecock then began to prove a challenge.

The more experienced riders also started to trickle into town led by team captain Surg Lt Cdr Dave Potter, who immediately began to set some electrifying times.

With a week to go before the Inter-Service race, it was clear that the Army and RN would be going toe to toe in the race; every time an Army rider set a fastest-ever time so too would a Navy rider.

However not everything was plain sailing; there were a number of injuries, which meant both the RN and Army would be missing some key people.

The weather was perfect for Cresta with overnight temperatures below -10°C, making the run hard, glassy and fast.

Taking full advantage of these conditions, all the riders began to set fast times. Then two days before the race three riders broke into a new league, becoming the three fastest-ever Service riders; Surg Lt Cdr Potter became the fastest ever with a time of 52.34 seconds.

As dawn broke on race day, tensions were high and nerves were fraught but there was quiet calm in the RN changing room.

The team of six then strode confidently and in full RN/RM colours to the top; Surg Lt Cdr

Potter, Col Oliver, WO1 Craig Birkby, Cpl Franey-Starling, Mne Ed Hill and Lt Cdr Andy Mills.

It was race time.

The first Army rider set a strong time, as did the first RAF rider but Surg Lt Cdr Potter smashed out a 53.3 to set the pace.

The Army's best rider then posted a 52.80 and was quickly followed by their No2 who rode a 53.09 – the Navy had to go for it.

Mne Hill rode like a man possessed and shaved over a second off his best-ever time with a 54.81.

Cpl Franey-Starling tried his best but just wasn't up to Shuttlecock at that speed and flew hard and fast out of the track, his race was over.

At the end of the first course of riding the Army led the RN by 3.5 seconds with the RAF a distant third.

Col Oliver and WO1 Birkby went on to set their fastest-ever times in the race while Lt Cdr Mills rode three excellent low 56s but it wasn't enough to beat a rampant Army team who set the lowest-ever aggregate team time.

They were deserved winners of the Prince Philip Trophy and Inter-Service Team Champions.

However, Inter-Service individual honours went to Surg Lt Cdr Potter, who won the Lord Trenchard Trophy in another record-breaking aggregate time.

Beginner Lt Rob Minns qualified for the top and competed in the Harland Trophy, while Cdre Jonathan Pentreath and Rear-Admiral Matt Parr took part in the Junction Handicap race.

The team are always looking for new riders so please get in touch with Surg Lt Cdr Potter at davidpotter1@nhs.net or Lt Col Jamie Summers at Jamie.summers643@mod.uk

Words: Lt Col Jamie Summers RM



● Surg Lt Cdr Potter won the Lord Trenchard Trophy



● Lt Cdr Andy Mills on the Cresta Run; Right, the Royal Navy team celebrate with their supporters



● WO1 Craig Birkby looks ahead; beginner Lt Mo Magzoub flies out of Shuttlecock